An introduction to a film by

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THE APOCALYPSE FILMS COMPANY

The Filmmaker

Claire Denis, Cannes, 2013

'There's no better filmmaker working in the world right now.'

– Nick James, *Sight and Sound*

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Claire Denis

- Claire is now routinely described as one of the greatest directors working in film today.
- All Claire's films have been selected for Cannes, Venice and Berlin - with just one exception, which won the Golden Leopard at Locarno.
- *Sight and Sound* magazine named two of her films in their top ten list of 2009.
- She started her career as an assistant to Jim Jarmusch, Jacques Rivette and Wim Wenders, working on such classics as *Paris, Texas* and *Down by Law* and *Wings of Desire*.
- She made her debut in 1988 with *Chocolat*, which premiered at Cannes, and his since established herself as a major figure in contemporary film with *Beau Travail, White Material, Trouble Everyday* and *35 Shots of Rum*.
- In 2010 she was invited to head the jury of the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes film festival.
- Remarkably for a contemporary French filmmaker, all Claire's films have been distributed theatrically in both North America and the UK.

'No one in modern cinema has a more elastic syntax, the guts to build each movie according to its subject from the atoms up… see them all.'

– David Edelstein, *New York Magazine*

The Film

The film is about a group of criminals who accept a mission to explore a black hole.

TOTALLY ORIGINAL

- It is an original science fiction story, in English, making use of the very latest ideas from the worlds of science and art. It is created and directed by Claire Denis - the French filmmaker who has seen all her films selected by Cannes, Venice or Berlin.

AN EXTRAORDINARY CREATIVE TEAM

- Zadie Smith is the most acclaimed novelist of her generation; Olafur Eliasson is arguably the greatest artist working in the world right now; and Aurélien Barrau is a world expert in black holes and currently working at the Large Hadron Collider. They are all part of the extraordinary team creating this film.

PALME D'OR WINNERS

- The production team can boast two Palme d'Or awards between them (*Blue is the Warmest Colour* and *Underground*). The companies are The Apocalypse Films from the UK, Alcatraz Films from France and Pandora Filmproduktion from Germany.

WILD BUNCH

- The film is being sold by Wild Bunch - Europe's foremost sales agent. Their films have won four Palme d'Or awards in the last 15 years, as well as two Golden Lions and seven Academy Awards.

***In its ambition and craftsmanship, we believe this is a film that will rank alongside Kubrick's* 2001: A Space Odyssey *and Tarkovsky's* Solaris.**

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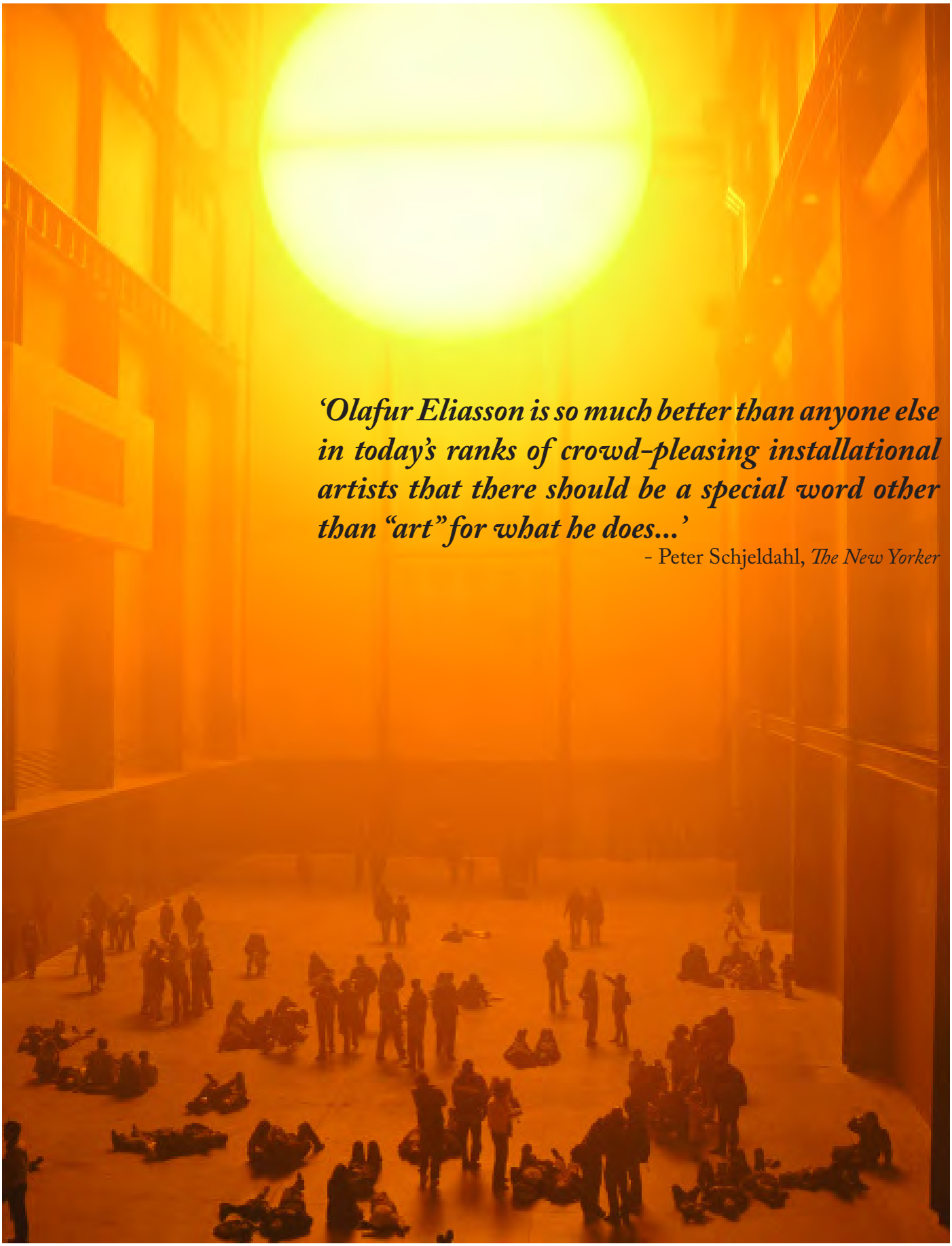
'Olafur Eliasson is so much better than anyone else in today's ranks of crowd-pleasing installational artists that there should be a special word other than "art" for what he does...'
- Peter Schjeldahl, *The New Yorker*

The Weather Project by Olafur Eliasson - Tate Modern, London

The Creative Team

Simply put, the film is being developed with some of the

- **ZADIE SMITH** is one of the world's greatest novelists. Her books include *White Teeth*, *On Beauty* and *NW*. She is our script writer.

- **OLAFUR ELIASSON** is arguably the most important artist in the world right now. He has had solo shows at the Tate Modern, MoMA, and the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris and he is our design and visual consultant.

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most original creative minds in the world right now …

From left to right: Aurélien Barrau, Nick Laird, Zadie Smith, Olafur Eliasson, and Stuart Staples

- **AURÉLIEN BARRAU** is our scientific consultant. He is an astrophysicist from CERN, a world expert in black holes and a scientist at the Large Hadron Collider.
- **NICK LAIRD** is the leading light in a new generation of Irish poets and writers; he has published three collections of poetry and two novels. He is writing the script with Zadie.
- **STUART STAPLES** of Tindersticks will write the original music.

Track Records

Claire Denis

- Bastards - 2013 - Cannes Film Festival
- White Material - 2009 - Venice Film Festival
- 35 Shots of Rum - 2008 - Venice Film Festival
- The Intruder - 2004 - Venice Film Festival
- Friday Night - 2002 - Venice Film Festival
- Trouble Every Day - 2001 - Cannes Film Festival
- Beau Travail - 1999 - Venice Film Festival
- Nenette and Boni - 1996 - Locarno Film Festival
- U.S. Go Home - 1994 - commissioned by Arte
- J'ai pas sommeil - 1994 - Cannes Film Festival
- S'en fout la mort - 1990 - Venice Film Festival
- Chocolat - 1988 - Cannes Film Festival

Claire Denis on the set of *The Bastards*

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'Denis is in the tradition of Rivette, Renoir and Vigo, who found a way of unpeeling the real to discover inner meanings.'

– David Thomson, The Guardian

Claire Denis and Olafur Eliasson

The Producers

- The film was initiated by **Oliver Dungey** of London's The Apocalypse Films Company**,** who recently produced *Miss Julie*, directed by Liv Ullmann and starring Jessica Chastain, Colin Farrell and Samantha Morton. Previously, Oliver was an acquisitions executive at The Works, working with films such as *Venus, This is England, 2 Days in Paris, Shortbus* and *10 Canoes*.

- Based in Paris, Alcatraz Film is owned by **Laurence Clerc** and **Olivier Théry-Lapiney**. In collaboration with Wild Bunch, they brought us the Palme D'Or winning *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, as well as the most recent film of Claire Denis, *Les Salauds*. Previously, Laurence executive produced Gaspar Noé's *Enter the Void* with Olivier as the line producer.

- **Claudia Steffen** and **Christoph Friedel** will be handling production for Pandora Film Produktion - a company that has produced 105 films since 1991, including among others Claire Denis, Jim Jarmusch, Chen Kaige, Aki Kaurismaki, Emir Kusturica, Kim Ki-Duk and Mira Nair. The company saw their production of Kusturica's *Underground* win the Palme d'Or in 1996.

HIGH LIFE

A treatment for a film by Claire Denis

THE APOCALYPSE FILMS COMPANY

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1. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - SPACECRAFT

Misters release a cloud of tiny droplets…we rise above a sprawl of vegetation – heads of cabbage, salad leaves, lentils and various types of bean climb the walls up to the ceiling…the space has the feeling of a tropical hothouse. Under grow lights there are also several marijuana plants, their roots growing into a cotton substrate. Water seeps to the floor, where a forgotten shoe lies in a corner…suddenly something can be heard in the distance…noises, then a voice…we leave the kitchen garden to head down a corridor delineated by yellow lights, indicators that signal to the ship's occupants that the current time corresponds to daylight hours…the yellow lights lead to a circular space equipped with sophisticated electronic instruments; it looks like a control room… beneath the central dome, a barrier marks off a space on the floor, an improvised playpen in which Willow, a bare-bottomed 15 month old, sits on a blanket, staring solemnly at the static on the control screens. Amid her babble, two syllables are recognisable.

CHILD:… Da… da… Dad-da ! Da-da!

A distant male voice echoes under the dome, addressing the baby.

MAN'S VOICE (Off):… Yes, sweetie, here I am. Listen…

The man's voice improvises a song for the little girl…

2. EXT. SPACECRAFT – INTERSTELLAR SPACE

In the black emptiness of outer space, an astronaut in a spacesuit (**Monte**) is pressed against the exterior of the spaceship like a mountain climber to a sheer cliff. He's making adjustments to one of the large, magnetic metal discs that shield the ship's living areas from cosmic rays. Behind the visor of his helmet, we see his lips move…

MONTE (singing): Willow, Willow, sweet Willow…

Monte is trying to remove a damaged piece of the magnetic armour with some pliers.

Now we are inside his helmet right up close to his lips, as they hum into the microphone that keeps him in radio contact with the ship. When he falls silent, we hear the girl's voice

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echoing in her father's helmet, repeating over and over "Da-da…Da-da…".

3. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAYLIGHT – CONTROL ROOM

Monte's voice reverberates through the control room…left to her own devices, little Willow is surrounded: levers, buttons, diodes, dials and computers. There's not a living soul to keep her company, nothing but her father's voice and the whirr of navigation instruments. On one of the many control screens, static suddenly gives way to a black and white image: on the crest of a grassy knoll appear the stationary silhouettes of bare-chested horsemen, with their long flowing hair, spears and feather headdresses…. The child stares at this image from another space-time… It lasts only a few seconds and when Willow reaches out it disappears, reappears, then dissolves permanently into the static. The child lets out a shrill scream…

4. EXT. SPACECRAFT – INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Willow's cry of anguish reverberates in her father's helmet. The pliers slip from Monte's gloved hands and stick to a lower section of the riveted surface like a magnet. With acrobatic skill, he gathers in the tool with the tip of his foot…

Monte manages to install the new part…

The damaged piece of metal, detached and discarded, remains pinned against the spaceship…

From this perspective, and despite its speed, the dilapidated structure of the vessel seems to be at a standstill, as if fixed to a black backdrop pricked with stars. The miniscule human figure making the repairs seems even more insignificant.

5. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAYLIGHT– AIRLOCK - ACCESS TO EXTERIOR

The doors to the exterior close. Firmly on his own two feet, Monte takes off his helmet and his spacewalk suit, like a knight removing his armour, and hangs up the heavy equipment to reveal shorts and an old t-shirt, on which can be seen the faded logo of a private consortium. There's hardly a blemish on his face; his physique is the result of intense discipline; he has a white streak in his hair. He could well be in his thirties. He heads off towards the garden…

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6. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY THEN NIGHT - CONTROL ROOM

Little Willow plays with her bowl and spoon. Monte takes a portion of food from a hot plate before putting his daughter on his lap… He tests the temperature himself before letting her swallow her first spoonful of puréed vegetables.

MONTE: Mmm… Taste that, Willow. Taste how good that is.

Then we see Monte finishing off Willow's bath, using only a dampened washcloth - for water is a precious commodity to them…he carefully wipes her face, ears, neck and hands. Willow seems to enjoy it. A little time afterwards, Willow sits on a receptacle and has a pee…The brightness of the ship's light steadily decreases and the yellow strips that had earlier indicated daylight hours turn to blue, marking the move into the equivalent of a terrestrial night time.

7. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT - CORRIDOR

With Willow strapped to his chest in a makeshift baby-carrier, Monte heads down a corridor to discard the vegetable scraps and his daughter's urine into a recycling system… It churns into action. Tubes separate liquids and solids.

MONTE (to his daughter): You don't eat your own fucking shit. Even recycled. Even if it doesn't look like shit anymore... That's what they call a taboo, you see? My sweet little girl. If my old man could see me now, he'd say [Monte adopts a gravelly voice to imitate his father]: "You don't break the laws of nature without paying for it, you little son of a bitch".

8. FLASHBACK

A little boy, flanked by his dog, is kneading together a turd and some sand…A man slaps the child.

9. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Monte changes Willow into her nightclothes: a romper clearly fashioned from the soft material of an old tracksuit. Father takes daughter in his arms and carries her over to the section of the room that has been transformed into a nursery. His interior monologue trails off into onomatopoeia, murmured into the girl's ear. The blue light signals we're in the nocturnal phase. At the same height as the bunks, a small homemade hammock serves as her bed. Monte lays her down. He reaches for his guitar, wedges it against his chest… Monte starts to play and, lulled by the clear bright notes of an arpeggio, Willow is soon asleep. A warning light begins to blink, and we see its red glow reflecting on them both.

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10. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — CONTROL ROOM

Monte sits at a screen, softly recording his daily report for the central computer…

> MONTE: ID 149, reporting. I removed the defective piece from the external magnetic panel and replaced it with one of my own making. (Silence) I've decided to do without everything that uses energy unnecessarily. I am fully aware of the consequences. Tough call, but I might as well get used to it... For the child's sake. To maximize our chances of survival. Over and out.

On the screen, the red indicators stops blinking and disappear. The computer confirms: "149: report received - clearance granted - activation of life-support systems – end of procedure." All the onscreen indicators turn green.

11. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LOWER LEVELS, CORRIDOR THEN SARCOPHAGUS ROOM

We follow Monte down a long corridor.

An automatic door opens. He enters.

The continuous sound of machinery hums in the vast space. In the half-light, we can make out a dozen or so oblong cases in the middle of the room.

Three of them are not in use. He heads towards one of them.

There is a name engraved on its plaque: Boyse, followed by an ID number and blood group.

A greenish light emanates from the sarcophagi in use. Through their square windows, we see sleeping faces haloed in green…a young mixed-race man, a young man with brown hair… a young black woman and a young albino. Some of them sport necklaces or bracelets fashioned from twisted metal…and their appearance betrays the wear of short but tough lives.

Monte pauses a moment over the face of an older man lying in the last sarcophagus. Nothing but the width of the glass separates him from the dark-skinned face of this man.

> MONTE (off screen): Captain Chandra… I've come for you.

Monte disconnects the system that supports the active sarcophagi… Their green lights go out, accompanied by a weak electronic shunt.

He unbolts and lifts the protective cover off Chandra.

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Carefully, he removes Chandra from his sarcophagus.

11. b. INT – ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Monte's flashback:

On a screen in the control room, a clear sky and the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas can be seen behind the roofs of a farm. Journalists and a man they call Professor sit in the shade of a tree. The man, of impressive bearing, responds to their questions in a refined English with an Indian accent. Under his apparent calm, we can feel the violence of his anger.

SCHOLAR: I have always been opposed to the death penalty. But I have yet to acquire the necessary power to convince our politicians to rehabilitate those condemned to death. I have not succeeded in banning these penal colonies for teenagers… (Pause) These tests in outer space - which involve some radical experiments - are taking place without any oversight. Inmates from death-row are selected to be used as guinea pigs… It is supposedly another way for them to serve their sentence. And for their prison officers, it is an altogether different way to be a prison officer. It is properly terrifying when you think about it. Is this really how our highest government authorities hope to deal definitively with our society's criminals? I doubt very much whether…

A REPORTER: Dr. Khishnan, aren't you afraid to express your opinion?

SCHOLAR: No. (In Bengali) If these images manage to reach the ship…I would like to say to its great pilot - who is now little more than a prison warden – that he has betrayed himself…all so that his sins might be forgotten and that his loved ones receive sacksful of cash!

Sitting in front of one of the screens, Monte and Tcherny (a Slav, probably the same age) watch Captain Chandra let loose a stream of invective in Bengali.

SCHOLAR (Continuing his diatribe): You can call me all the names you want, Chandra. By the time you see this I, Baghat Krishnan, Nobel physicist, will have been dead for decades and so I say to you "Go fuck yourself"… it would take you several lifetimes to pay for the consequences of your actions. (Breaking off, to the reporter) Did you know we still have leopards where I live?

Monte smiles.

CHANDRA: What are you smiling at? You understand Bengali?

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MONTE: No… I think I got the message though. I just hope the leopards haven't disappeared.

CHANDRA: Shut up, Monte. I've seen your file. You disappeared too. You don't exist anymore…

Monte notes Tcherny's eyes on him.

12. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – AIRLOCK

He conscientiously dresses Chandra's lifeless body in its spacesuit… a long operation that's not without difficulty.

He finally attaches the helmet and lays the captain on his back, beside five others already suited up.

Exhausted, Monte gives himself a moment before putting on his own equipment.

He then unlocks the airlock to the exterior.

13. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Seen from the exterior, a door opens on the rear side of the spaceship. Monte appears in the doorway. One half of his spacesuit and helmet are brilliantly illuminated by the intense light given off by the mass of stars that seemingly lie ahead the ship, while his other half remains concealed from the light, plunged in the jet black obscurity that reigns in the vessel's wake.

14. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – AIRLOCK

Like a burial at sea in a bygone era, Monte uses all his might to shove the captain into outer space.

MONTE: It's time to leave, Major Tom…if you dare…

The captain's ejected corpse breaks free from the vessel and falls inexorably…

Monte repeats the ritual as he disposes of the others.

Dibs, Ettore, Leonard, Elektra and the hulking figure of Tcherny tumble out and away from the spaceship. They grow smaller, then disappear into the fathomless black.

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Only Mink, the lightest, remains. Monte picks her up and throws her out but his strength betrays him and her body remains pinned to the fuselage by the ship's gravitational field… Monte tries several times to kick her free, but finally gives up and shuts the door.

15. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The huge, battered spaceship continues on its way.

Mink's corpse remains stubbornly stuck to the spaceship like a magnet.

The tiny bodies of the astronauts drift like atoms lost in the infinite space of the galaxy.

16. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – AIRLOCK

Only one suit now remains in the sad empty space. It has a name tag: Boyse. Monte stands motionless in the foreground, his shoulder and profile in view.

17. MONTE'S VISION

*Anonymous beneath a spacesuit and helmet, an astronaut floats upside down in slow motion. The astronaut does a complete somersault while slowly pulling off her gloves, as if performing a striptease… and then we see her tattooed fingers removing her helmet to reveal the face and the mane of red hair of a very young woman (**Boyse**)…. She wears a necklace made from bits of microprocessor and fibre optic cables. Free from her spacesuit, the regulation t-shirt and shorts show off her curves… Boyse has a dreamy look in her eyes … and her lips smile enigmatically, distantly…*

18. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – AIRLOCK - ACCESS TO EXTERIOR

Monte hangs up his helmet and removes his suit. Suddenly his great body crumples. He is overcome with uncontrollable sobs.

19. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT- LOWER LEVELS

On the control screen, the central computer confirms the conservation of energy. Monte sees the zone for the sarcophagus room go dark. The vast space is barely discernible in the lugubrious orange-red light. Something metallic tinkles faintly, like a bell tolling from a distant past.

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Monte backtracks. The tubes of the recycling system rumble overhead. We see liquid flowing through the tubes. As he passes, we can make out some sort of disused chamber. The now defunct Love Machine lies open like an empty shell. At the centre of its shattered cavity lie the remains of a curved throne… Further on, Monte pauses as he crosses an area of the hold covered in bizarre graffiti. He continues until he reaches the kitchen garden, where he rests… Monte takes some dried cannabis from his pocket, crumbles it and packs it into the bowl of a home-made pipe. He lights the blend and takes his first puff…

20. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — LOWER LEVELS

Monte takes the freight-lift that leads to the upper levels, bathed in the blue light of artificial night. We can hear the distant crying of the little girl…

21. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT— SLEEPING QUARTERS

Back with Willow, her cries grow louder. Monte gives his daughter her comfort blanket, a sort of rag doll, and then takes her in his arms and paces back and forth with her to calm her down. When she falls back asleep, he puts her back in her hammock, undresses and lies down on his bunk. A wide scar forms an irregular groove from his hand up to his elbow. Monte reflexively fingers this old wound. Overcome with doubts, Monte turns to his sleeping girl…

> MONTE: I'm afraid, Willow… afraid of the dark, afraid of dying, afraid of it all... (A beat) You though, I have the impression nothing will ever scare you…

Willow opens her eyes again and looks at her father… He strokes her palm as she reaches out to him.

22. INSERT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

The previous image dissolves and distorts into dark matter, with its folds, depths, and its plays of light illuminating the flashes of the past…Monte's face in close-up.

23. FLASHBACK – A HOUSE ON THE BEACH

A beach house and its garden of miniature palm trees stand stock still against a blue sky dotted with clouds. It suddenly all comes to life: clouds drift by, leaves rustle in the breeze.

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Inside, the father and mother are at the table with a guest. Monte is 7 and hiding under the table (we recognize the man who did the slapping and the child who was slapped in sequence 8). His father, speaking loudly and clearly, challenges him with a sum. Under the table, he surreptitiously pushes the dog aside with the flick of an old slipper and prods Monte to do the sum. The precocious child concentrates for a few seconds then states the cube root… The father looks over proudly to the dumbfounded guest.

> *FATHER: Mad, isn't it? When he started, he couldn't even read. Check this out – he can do even better. (to Monte) Listen up, Boy. Using 1, 3, 4, and 6, how do you end up with 24?*
>
> *MOTHER: Monte, where are you going? Sit down, it's time to eat.*

Monte heads outside without answering, runs over the dunes and down the beach in the last light of the day, then throws himself into the darkening surf of the ocean. The dog barks as he runs after his young master.

Seen from below, his young body floats weightlessly, suspended below the surface, buffeted by the waves…

His mother panics and calls out… She wades into the sea up to her thighs… Through the foaming wash, we see her arms searching for him…then seizing him, clasping him to herself in the fresh air, saving him from drowning…

24. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Monte sits on the edge of his bunk and lets his daughter's hand go… He runs his fingertips over her little body…

> MONTE: It would be so easy to drown you like a kitten.... or to wring that little neck... You haven't asked anything of anyone... You've done nothing wrong… You didn't deserve a life like this. Why do I love you so much, my darling? It's just selfishness, isn't it…right?

Monte stands up…

23b. FLASHBACK CONTD. – A HOUSE ON THE BEACH

We see more images from the flashback: safe and sound on the sand, Monte (as a child) watches as his father strides into the water, takes hold of his mother and lifts her up…we

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hear her start to sob in a mixture of fear and sensuality. The adults allow themselves be rolled over by the surf…

25. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CORRIDOR AND THEN LAB

He heads down the corridor. He walks through the control room, skirting around the disorder of the playpen where their clothes are hanging pell-mell to dry … He continues to the medical lab. Opens the door. Rummages through drawers and shelves. But all that is left of their stocks are two boxes of antibiotics and a few doses of morphine… Inside one of the boxes he finds a scrap of paper with a sketch of a complete sphere made out of the bodies of a man and a woman … To soothe his nerves, he gulps down a bottle of rubbing alcohol; he feels it seeping into his bloodstream; he sits down on the floor and takes his head into his hands. Monte slumps down, a look of ecstasy on his face, seemingly lost in the maze of his thoughts…

26. MONTE'S VISION

In reverse-shot, the sad smile of a woman, extremely beautiful, with dark hair…and then Monte's arm with a long gaping wound which has been cleaned…the female doctor's hands apply staples to close up the wound.

27. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Monte carefully removes the dummy from his daughter's mouth – lying in her hammock, Willow wakes and cries out in distress, grasping for the rag doll that her father's just removed. Monte replaces the dummy but she doesn't calm down; her cries increase and she rips the doll in her rage.

In the silent bedroom, Monte sews the arm back onto the doll while Willow sleeps in peace…

28. INT. NIGHT THEN ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS

The artificial light changes…the nocturnal phase, with its shadows and blue light, gives way to the brighter yellow light. A new 'day' dawns. In the growing light, the outline of Monte can be seen…Monte lets Willow take a few tentative steps unaided, though he watches her very closely. Willow puts one foot in front of the other without her father's guiding hand. She makes her way forward, a little unsure, her arms out for balance, her gait wide. She stops, laughs and then has a go taking some steps backwards…Monte watches Willow come back towards him unsteadily…Around them we can make out the ghostly outline of other people passing by…

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29. MONTE'S VISION

> *MONTE'S VOICEOVER:…[referring to the presence of those ghostly figures] At that stage, it had already been nearly three years since we'd left Earth…*

We see the flowing movement of clouds above the oceans and continents of earth, as seen from the stratosphere.

> *MONTE'S VOICEOVER: …our spaceship was accelerating near the speed of light. Accelerating at 1G is comfortable because it creates a simulation of gravity. Free from the effects of weightlessness, we were able about to move about normally. The body handles it better…*

We pull back in an unrelenting zoom from our blue planet…and the whole solar system comes into view, with the enormous burning star that is the Sun at its centre. Circling this ball of fire, with its extrusions and jets of hot gas, we see the rocky planets: Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars…followed by the giant planets of gas, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, with their rings and attendant satellites…and finally the asteroids and various dwarf planets…and at the furthest reaches of the system, the great mass of comets…

> *MONTE'S VOICEOVER: …Having ventured beyond the limits of the solar system – which is merely a tiny, peripheral part of the galaxy – we travelled even further into the Milky Way, which stretches for some 100,000 light years.*

The solar system gives way in its turn to a vision of the Milky Way, as one might see it through a powerful on-board telescope …a wide pinkish white strip set against the deep black of outer space…this image is slowly replaced by a new view of our galaxy, from a different angle, which shows a spiral with its giant 'arms' made of hundreds of billions of stars, gas, dust and dark matter….

> *MONTE'S VOICEOVER: At that distance, it was a delusion to think we could communicate with Earth…it would have taken years to receive a response from central control to one of our questions.*

The silence of outer space gives way to the sound of trains passing, shouts, and the clanking of locks and doors closing…

> *MONTE'S VOICEOVER: We were scum, we were all the leftovers that didn't fit into the system…Arrested, condemned and locked up for life, the Agency then offered us an alternative to our prison sentences or, for some, the death penalty:*

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to be guinea pigs in the service of Science. Those of us with the highest IQs were selected for the crew of a new type of spaceship.

Seen from behind, a young woman clings to the side of an open-air train carriage, which has been daubed with the words 'SWELL'. With her hair blowing in the wind, she looks out at the vast grassy plain in the twilight….

There are two very young runaways asleep (one of them is the young Monte)…

MONTE'S VOICEOVER:…We had accepted to be subjected to a series of tests during our mission, including the possibilities of human reproduction in space…

Traveling at full speed, the tracks form two grey tangents under the final train carriage… flanking the rails, we see the ballast and the expanse of scrubland that zip by in two broad blurred lines of grey and yellow… A very young vagabond, with a bare torso, hangs down by one hand and gives the finger to the entire world with the other…

Alone in his police cell, a dazed boy of 12 is captured by the CCTV…

28 – CONTD. – INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CORRIDORS

Monte walks down the corridor, holding the baby's hands as he guides and supports her. Around them, we continue to see ghostly presences.

MONTE'S VOICEOVER:…the significant financial outlay required for our mission was justified by the potential of exploring a rotating black hole – according to the Penrose theory, it could provide humanity with a near infinite amount of energy. Once accomplished, this mission would wipe our crimes from the record and make us so-called heroes…isn't that right, dear Willow?

Monte passes down a section of the corridor where the words 'It's swell' have been permanently scratched…

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31. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR THEN CONTROL ROOM

A white 'day' light illuminates the corridor…the spaceship seems brand new, it's practically gleaming (certainly compared to what has been seen so far).

An on-screen title reads "BEFORE".

> MONTE'S VOICEOVER: At 80% of the speed of light, the entire sky converges in front of you. It radically altered our perception. To look ahead in the direction of our travel gave the curious sensation of moving backwards.

The ghostly figures become solid, revealing the ship's full crew. At the back of the group is Monte…younger, rebellious hair, clean-shaven…he comes up on Boyse, the young red-head (seen in scene 17), who has lagged behind the others to scratch 'it's swell' on the spotless walls of the corridor…with a prod on the arm, Monte ushers her forward with the others.

The troupe enters the control room and they take up their places. In a group around the dark-skinned captain (Chandra) can be seen Monte, the Slav co-pilot (Tcherny), the female doctor (Dibs) and the youngest among them: Boyse, a black woman (Elektra), a brown-haired boy (Ettore), an albino girl (Mink), a mixed race boy (Leonard) and a blond guy called Nansen. The shutter on the front windscreen opens and the view of space that reveals itself transfixes everyone…great multitudes of stars seem to have unfixed themselves and regrouped in front of the ship, fusing together to form an extremely unsettling mass of light. As seen through the windscreen, we are seemingly traveling backwards away from this extremely luminous, dazzling white point…

Monte hangs at the back but he also looks out at this disorientating spectacle.

Chandra makes a short speech. He admonishes them for their apathy, and in particular towards their compulsory physical conditioning. He exhorts them to prepare for the deceleration manoeuvre, which marks the start of their approach towards the black hole. To Dibs (the female doctor first glimpsed in scene 26), he insists on the successful outcome of her experiments and reminds her of her duty to ensure the physical and psychological readiness of the crew. Monte notices that Dibs is looking at him.

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33. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – GYM

Monte's interior monologue sets out his own thoughts on the voyage and its objective:

> MONTE (VO): It's strange. Everything was going well. The crew had bonded behind the idea that we would return home once our mission was accomplished. Apart from Chandra, the only person to question this little fairy tale was me. I'd worked out the reality: when we made it to the black hole, 6 years would have gone by on the spaceship but on Earth that would have been 84 years! And if you add the 6 years needed for the hypothetical trip home, more then 190 years would have gone by on Earth!

A poster reminds everyone of the necessary exercises to be undertaken by all astronauts during long missions to ensure they maintain their muscle mass.

The entire crew are hunched over their exercise bikes (all the men and women seen in Scene 30). Resistance drills (up a steep incline). Monte participates but also notices the somewhat mocking intensity with which Boyse does her exercise. Nansen is in perfect shape. Ettore is struggling and Mink passes out…Dibs (the dark-haired woman we saw tending to Monte's wounded arm) rushes over to her and, dripping with sweat herself, takes her blood pressure. As she helps a groggy Mink to her feet, she gags at the overwhelming smell of BO. Dibs reminds the rest of the crew of the importance of hygiene and also, through the need to conserve resources, to clean only in those folds and crevices where bacteria grow.

34. INT – ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CONTROL ROOM.

The indicator blinks red. Accompanied by Monte, Dibs and Tcherny, Chandra delivers the obligatory daily report to the central computer, including information about the crew's preparation for the deceleration manoeuvre. The ship's life-support systems are reconfirmed by the computer.

34b. INT – ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CORRIDOR

Tcherny, Dibs and Monte exit to make their rounds, to check that everyone is in their sleeping quarters…Monte's voiceover: "We were the 'old' guys among the younger guinea pigs and it was our responsibility to maintain order and ensure the fulfilment of the scientific mission…"

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38. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — SLEEPING QUARTERS, THE CORRIDORS

The 3 girls get into bed. Shadows lurk around the sleeping quarters. Monte and Tcherny do their rounds. We see Dibs in her lab, doing press-ups in the ultraviolet light.

39. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — THE LAB

Monte leaves Tcherny to continue alone and he joins Dibs in her lab, who he finds sweating on the floor, determined to finish her long set of press-ups without being distracted. Dibs gets up and sponges down her face, neck, and armpits with wipes. "You've come to see if I'm working out properly?", she says. Monte smiles. "You wouldn't have something would you? I've got a headache, I'm sleeping badly". Dibs smiles too: "You're so tense, it doesn't surprise me". Dibs opens her cabinet and hands him some pills. Monte thanks her, amicably putting his hand on her shoulder. "At this rate," she says, "the medication's going to run out before we reach the objective". Dibs pushes up against him, Monte pushes her away, laughing: "Dibs, I've told you a thousand times, I'm toughening up, getting ready for the worst…don't want to count on anyone". Dibs: "And yet you're very happy for me to be there when you need me!" He leaves without answering and disappears into the blue shadows of the corridor. We stay with Dibs in her lab, alone like a jilted lover.

34c. INT – ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CONTROL ROOM.

Alone before the control room's screens, Chandra watches some old messages, fragments of a very earthly past (images that cruelly accentuate the difference between life on Earth and on the spaceship). The first video shows a taxi ride at night through the sweaty streets of Goa: shops, tradesmen, people, lights, sacred cows in the headlights…the fleeting happiness of a daily life that is at once hard and sweet and is now so completely unavailable to him.

35. *CHANDRA'S FLASHBACK*

Dense jungle at night, a jaguar roams…the wild animal freezes when a soldier in combat fatigues crosses his path…the man stares at the beast, which snarls in his direction before disappearing into the tall grass. The officer (who we suspect is a young Chandra) approaches a small wooden structure at the end of a garden. Windows open to the tropical evening, lights are on, a curtain in the doorway sways in the breeze. We approach with Chandra…inside, another soldier is looking over a file. The man senses the presence at his back and without a beat says "Brother, if you want a meeting, come see me tomorrow at the President's residence". Chandra leans over the man and, before he can react, he slits his throat with a short, expert movement…

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35b. INT – ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – BACK TO THE CONTROL ROOM.

Chandra realises that Monte and Tcherny are back from making their tour. Monte looks at Tcherny.

> MONTE (VO): From day one, I felt that Tcherny was reluctant to accept Chandra's authority, and that whatever happened, he would be on my side.

36. INT – ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE LOWER LEVELS, THEN THE GARDEN

Seated near to the large shiny new sphere (the vestiges of which had been seen previously in Part 1) the girls are keeping to themselves: Mink makes a plait in Boyse's hair as Elektra watches on…The indicators show that the machine is in action. In disgust, Boyse proudly spits in the direction of the machine's pipes…Nansen exits the machine. On spotting Mink, Elektra and Boyse, he testily says 'Girls, please, go away. Why are you hanging around here?' The girls head off in the direction of the garden, where they lie down in the lush humidity of the plants.

37. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT— THE COMMON ROOM

Very old music can be heard, beautiful and mournful…Chandra is in his own world. Around him, the entire crew dines in silence… Dibs forces Elektra to eat her food (the black girl, who is pregnant) but she refuses to take it. Overcome with the depressive atmosphere, Chandra orders them to turn off the fucking bleak music. A heavy silence falls. The crew painstakingly gathers up and throws each scrap of leftovers into the recycling system. Ettore starts to sing the opening notes of 'Déjà Vu' (Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young); Monte then joins in. Everyone stops to listen. Nansen joins in shortly too…"If I had ever been here before / I would probably know just what to do / Don't you? / If I had ever been here before on another time around the wheel / I would probably know just how to deal / With all of you / And I feel / Like I've been here before / Feel etc. A warmth grows among them, a brief relaxation in the strict discipline of life aboard the ship…Dibs makes a pot of tea out of some cannabis leaves and swills it about. Mink and Boyse seem completely disconnected from any sense of communal spirit. They make a sign to Elektra and all three leave the room.

40. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS

The corridor, very brightly lit, leading to the lower levels.

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41. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – IN THE LOWER LEVELS

The sphere is in use. The muffled bass of electro music can be heard…The Love Machine.

> MONTE (VO): Sleep, wake, eat... Life aboard the ship existed in a bubble, which I accepted. We were protected from any kind of unexpected incident and condemned to perpetual isolation…

42. INT. DAY – THE LOVE MACHINE

The light changes constantly, from blinding strobe to chiaroscuro…

Dibs abandons herself to all her sexual fantasies, which are intuited by the machine and immediately given form with new images, new erogenous zones, new positions, movements, caresses and sensations.

Attached to a sort of plinth, Dibs's body offers itself up, pivots… A pretty white bandage gags her mouth. Her wrists are bound by thick, rough rope…

Her features contort, her face strains or lights up with pleasure… She calls out, ordering, yielding, begging, groaning, howling…

Under the control of her imagination, an expanse of skin darkens under her fingers…these transformations continue throughout the session…a range of skin tones that reacts to the subject's slightest desire…

For a moment, an image crystallizes: a partner's face… we make out Monte's features…

Dibs pushes her face greedily towards some lips, a tongue…

Her black hair suddenly turns ash-blonde…

Her pubic hair turns blonde too… Her breasts become enormous, swollen mammaries ready to explode…

Dibs sees her thighs spread, soaked… A small tentacle strokes her clitoris. She roars with pleasure…

A long, oblong object pushes into into her vagina and pumps like a piston…

Her hands grip firm curves and knead them…

A more vigorous thrust makes her arch her back. Something soft and furry parts her legs.…

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Now a mouth licks the shaved genitals of a woman, which become progressively covered in a curly, auburn down, which quivers, opens up…

She sees a kaleidoscope of orifices. She laughs.

Up close, she sees her own face, more beautiful, flushed…

Her fingers grope for penises or push into gaping holes… Inside and out, up and down… she can no longer distinguish her own organs from the machine's… Dibs climaxes.

The session ends… as if the power has been cut all of sudden…

Sitting astride a seat whose form suggests an animal's rump but with human skin, Dibs comes to, naked and dripping with sweat…

As she dresses herself, a machine starts up with the sound of a blower. Bodily fluids and various secretions are sucked up and cleaned away. The self-cleaning programme automatically disinfects every surface of any viruses, pathogens, bacteria.

43. INT. DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Dibs emerges from the machine; Monte is there. Monte's voiceover explains that he abstains:

> MONTE (VO): Like all of us, I had used the Love Machine. But as time passed, I refused to indulge my libido. I chose abstinence, which I might even call chastity… This was better suited to my training and my sense of non-conformism.

Dibs and Monte pass each other. Dibs is visibly unsettled and, in her emotional state, has a nose bleed. "I guess you're not such a hard nut after all" teases Monte the ex-playboy, now playing the role of a warrior-monk. "…It's been too long, Monte. Believe me - you'll explode sooner or later." says Dibs as she walks away.

44. MONTE'S FLASHBACK – LIKE A FADING MEMORY

First prison bars… then the interior courtyard of death row and an imposing metal cage. Behind the square bars, we make out the silhouettes of uniformed prisoners, taking a walk in their enclosure.

> *MONTE (VO): In the months leading up to our launch, the Agency allowed a Swedish sexologist to subject prisoners without parole to his obsolete tests for zero-gravity copulation – with the objective that our species might manage to reproduce in space.*

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A black man with greying hair appears behind a glass divider, tri-focal tortoiseshell glasses perched on the bridge of his nose. The sexologist sports a white lab coat and bow-tie. A name tag on his coat reads 'Digbeu Larsson'…

The sexologist's face…

> *Pr. LARSSON (In Swedish): At the same time, we are testing a second configuration, which is possibly more stable, and which uses a system of ties and straps which can be modified to suit each subject's specific shape. The harness is attached to the subject via a type of Velcro and is manipulated electrically.*

On the other side of the window, a space has been set up where prison guards unchain tattooed boys and girls being used as guinea pigs. They wear only the tops of their uniforms An elastic belt is tied around one of the boy's waists, then one of the girl's.

> *LARSSON'S VOICE (Off): This set-up allows the subject to experiment with several points of contact through a voice command system linked to the robotic arm. The effectiveness of this new system has been proven in numerous experiments. Through these experiments, it has been established that the robotic arm can be used by a single subject as a unisexual device. We believe this could be of enormous importance on long distance missions, especially so for subjects unable to find a suitable partner.*

The two subjects start to float about in the confined space as the weightlessness takes effect. Throughout the test, they struggle to control their movements before finally achieving a standard missionary position. Penetration proves difficult…and once achieved, equally difficult to maintain…

On the other side of the window, Professor Larsson works desperately to guide them with instructions and gestures…

> *LARSSON: Don't forget it's all about muscles. Nothing is possible without them: you can't even raise an eyebrow or crack a smile… Hmm, hmm, look at me (Scowling)… there, on your torso, you have 400 on one side and 400 on the other. Intercourse: it's also a question of muscles!*

The guinea pig 'couple' tries one more acrobatic, weightless copulation.

We notice Dibs in her orange jump suit, in chains like the other convicts, monitoring Prof. Larsson's experiments with a look of scorn on her face.

The next couple is readied; we recognise the girl, a young woman with short red hair.

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46. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Monte sits at his watch post. On one of his screens, he sees the redheaded Boyse walking around the well-ordered allotments in the garden…her hair and her face dirtied with plant matter and substrate… then, as if aware that she's being watched, she turns to the camera and looks directly into its lens before abruptly turning away. Monte then sees Tcherny walk in. Tcherny sits close to Boyse and stares her down. We see that he's talking to her but she says nothing. Boyse dusts off the substrate caught in her hair. Tcherny makes an ambiguous move on her…Boyse shies away and walks out of the garden.

47. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

On screen, Monte sees Tcherny follow Boyse into the lab…where she finds herself faced with Dibs. Dibs hands her a wipe to clean the smudges of dirt from her face. Boyse doesn't move a muscle. Dibs unceremoniously does the job herself.

48. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

A suspecting Dibs opens Boyse's fist to find some leaves and some miniscule red flowers. "What are you expecting to do with this? It'll never work – it's old wives' tales. It'll just make you sick. Your hormones are getting to you", says Dibs. Boyse remains silent.

49. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

We return to Monte, still looking over his screens, as he watches Boyse and her stone-faced expression as she faces Dibs. Tcherny enters the control room. Monte accuses him of having been inappropriate and tells him not to try it on again. Tcherny counters that actually it's Monte who's frustrated, who can't get things straight. He's conflating his own desires with reality. For Tcherny, it was Boyse who was being provocative.

45. EXT. OUTER SPACE

The space ship continues on its way in the freezing immensity of the galaxy…

50. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – A SMALL BOOTH WITHIN THE LAB

Ettore masturbates and ejaculates into a plastic beaker.

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51. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Ettore hands over his sperm sample to Dibs. Leonard enters and presents his beaker to the doctor, who logs it on her computer before freezing it. Once the two young men have left, Chandra enters and, with great dignity, places his own contribution on Dibs' desk.

52. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Now Monte comes in. His tube is empty. Monte looks at Dibs: "Feel free to tell on me". She: "Why can't you just do it like everyone else?" Monte: "You know exactly how I feel about these experiments in procreation. Why bother with me?" Dibs: "It's unhealthy not to use the machine; abstinence doesn't make you stronger – it's a proven fact. On the contrary, it cuts you off. You close up, you become hard like a stone". Dibs reaches out to him, as if to breach his armour. Monte: "If things were different, I could have…I could have been tempted". She comes closer to him: "You're the only one I trust here. You're the only person I could confide in". Tcherny then interrupts them, followed by Elektra, Boyse and Mink. "Best not to, Dibs, best not". Dibs murmurs "I like you a lot, Monte". Bothered by the presence of the others, Monte keeps quiet.

53. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR, CONTROL ROOM

Monte heads back to the control room. He sits down against the grey fuzz of the screen's static, lost in thought. An incongruous image appears: the great green expanse of the high plains with the grass swaying in the wind. It then dissolves into a million pixels before disappearing.

Monte's attention is drawn to the indicator showing that someone is about to use the Love Machine…

54. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Chandra locks himself in the Love Machine… his first fantasy emerges from out of the darkness and the pulsating sounds: a sensual heroine from the pantheon of Hindu gods…tears stream down his cheeks.

55. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

The alarm sounds. Monte is there. Chandra joins him at last and delivers the daily report. The alarm subsides and the indicators return to green.

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57. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – TRAINING AREA

The crew put themselves through their exercise drills in the gym beside the exercise bikes; they train with additional weights on their shoulders.

Monte: “We were now close to the deceleration manoeuvre; the tension was intense and we threw ourselves into our training to help us forget the terror.”

56. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – GIRLS’ SLEEPING QUARTERS

Dibs walks into the girls’ room. Mink sleeps and Boyse stirs on her bed. Dibs gently shakes Elektra to make her swallow some pills and liquid. When Dibs starting stroking her belly, Elektra feels really uncomfortable and shoots her an evil look. Now properly awake, Boyse sneers at Dibs: “Whoremonger!”

Fade to black.

58. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – GIRLS’ SLEEPING QUARTERS

Elektra is sprawled on her bed; her belly is a notable bump. Boyse and Mink are with her; she seems ill, out of sorts. Boyse: “Want to get rid of it? Mink and I can help you out”. Elektra hesitates: “Dunno…I feel it moving”. She takes Boyse’s hand and places it on her stomach. Boyse pulls her hand away, freaked out. Elektra to Mink: “You too, come and feel it”. But Mink doesn’t move.

The distended stomach of Elektra and the belly button crater at its summit…just below the surface of the skin we see a ripple briefly deform its roundness…Elektra: “You see, it’s too late”.

61. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS AND SLEEPING QUARTERS

A siren blares like a horn; its sound blazons the arrival of the deceleration manoeuvre to every part of the vessel. Tcherny and Monte burst into the sleeping quarters and bring out the girls for the deceleration manœuvre.

62. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Boyse refuses to go in…Monte uses all his weight to get control of her and push her inside the lab, where everything has been carefully laid out in preparation for the

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manoeuvre. Boyse eyeballs him, Monte turns away. Dibs notices this little interaction. Mink, Boyse and Elektra, so noticeably pregnant, take their places alongside the male subjects. Elektra is very tense and has a little difficulty getting situated. Dibs straps her into her place before passing out pills to them all. All of a sudden the warning lights go mad, indicating that something ominous is about to hit the ship…

63. EXT. SPACE

Something fulgurant flashes in front of the mass of stars, irradiating the ship's protective shields and instantly deforming them like the intense heat of the sun warps the horizon in the desert…but the magnetic screens resist and seem to repel this strange phenomenon.

64. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – INSIDE THE SHIP

The same fulguration passes through the structure of the ship and irradiates the empty corridors…Monte's voiceover informs us that this phenomenon is a storm of cosmic rays.

65. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Disquiet spreads among the younger crew, who become unsettled and panicky. Elektra vomits. Dibs cleans her up and tries to calm her – for this pregnant girl carries all her hopes…The indicators abruptly change to green and the tension ebbs from the room. Speaking from the control room, Chandra's voice reassures his team: "I'd like to check that the shields' magnets haven't suffered any damage before we initiate the manœuvre…Nansen, get yourself ready, Monte will accompany you". Nansen: "I don't need a chaperon!"

66 EXT. SPACE

Monte and Nansen carry out their inspection, pressed up against the exterior in their full spacesuits…they crawl about comically like a pair of lizards, clamped to the magnets…

67. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – AIRLOCK

Mission accomplished, the two men remove their helmets and suits. Once free of his heavy suit, Nansen doesn't hold back, jumping for joy and throwing himself effusively around Monte's neck… "Alright! We're going to make it!", he says. Monte: "Yeah, yeah, we'll be ok. Calm yourself".

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68. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY —CONTROL ROOM

At the controls, Captain Chandra takes charge of the manoeuvre, with his co-pilots Monte and Tcherny by his side. Chandra orders the main engine to be cut for several minutes.

69. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The two lateral engines that provide the ship's thrust start to wind down…

70. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY —CONTROL ROOM AND LAB

Imperceptibly, something changes in the spaceship: objects seem lighter and they begin to float…

71. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Slowly the dimmed jet engines swivel on their axis to point in the other direction.

72. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Chandra, Tcherny and Monte are affected by the loss of gravity and float, weightless.

On his control screen, Monte has a view of the lab at the end of the corridor, where the rest of the crew is assembled and subject to the same loss of gravity. Seeing the space in its entirety, he watches the whole process of its 180º rotation, in perfect synchronicity with the rotation of the exterior jet engines.

73. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

With the loss of artificial gravity, Dibs and the young subjects float as they watch the lab rotate.

A string of blood red bubbles escape from the collar of Boyse's uniform… and float around her like soap bubbles.

DIBS: There we go, you're having your period again. Time for me to get to work.

Boyse floats over to Dibs…

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She grabs her by the hair and tries to punch her… she ridicules her programme and hurls insults at her, calling her a butcher, a sadist…

The two women tussle with each other in zero gravity.

Leonard (the young man of mixed-race) and Nansen intervene…

74. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Outside, the engines finish their rotation… They now face forward in the direction of the ship's travel. But they remain dormant.

75. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE LAB, STILL IN ZERO GRAVITY

The engines have still not reignited. Everyone remains in a state of weightlessness…they wait in feverish apprehension.

Chandra's voice comes over the radio: "Do not worry. Everything is under control. It will take a little time to reignite".

76. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Chandra is petrified. Chandra: "Monte, please, try something – I know you can". Monte: "Ok…I'll see".

Suppressing his own fear, Monte takes control of the procedure…he overrides the system. It takes some time, which adds to the anxiety…the simulator for the main engine is completely unresponsive: nothing works…Monte, Tcherny and Chandra discuss the situation. Chandra is losing patience…Monte proposes a solution: open up the valves and flush out whatever's preventing the system from connecting the matter with the anti-matter. Chandra: "You sure about that?"

77. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE LAB

Boyse looks around smiling at the others and loudly voices her hopes that the manoeuvre will be a failure and that they'll all snuff it.

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78. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

They can hear what's being said in the lab and so the Captain keeps the rest of the crew informed: they're going to try to fix the breakdown and kick-start the engine by flooding it with an unprecedented amount of anti-matter. It's a tricky operation. He then mutes the speaker and turns to his lieutenants…if the target is suddenly flooded with a large quantity of anti-matter then the whole ship will just be blown apart in a ball of fire. For Monte, there's no point in humming and hawing or finding hypothetical alternatives. This is their only option. Over the radio, Dibs says she's not surprised the idea comes from Monte and that he's prepared to make them take risks. "It's typical of him", she objects. Chandra makes the call: "OK, we'll do it. Get yourselves ready". Monte and Chandra make their modifications and stand by…

78a – ANIMATION

An animation illustrates the workings of the engine and shows us the source of the glitch. We see the system's reserves of matter, and its corresponding reserves of anti-matter, and the advanced technology upon which their ship depends.

79. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE LAB

Those in the lab are paralysed with fear. Some howl in self-pity. Someone calls out to God. Dibs does what she can to keep them calm; she distributes more medication. Taking advantage of the chaos and with her aching belly, Elektra releases herself and exits the lab without being stopped…she can be seen floating about looking for a place to shut herself away…

80. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

In a flash, an immense jet shoots out of the engines…

81. INT. CONTROL ROOM

At the same moment, an enormous jolt shakes the ship and its crew.

78b – ANIMATION CONTD.

The animation illustrates the developments inside the engine.

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82. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Finally, progressively expounding more and more energy, the jets start to thrust in the opposite direction…

83. INT. CONTROL ROOM

The return to artificial gravity is harsh. The manœuvre has been successful: Chandra, Monte and Tcherny are relieved. On their screens, they see the younger crew leave the lab…but a little crowd forms in the corridor.

84. INT. – ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR

Dibs clears a path…to reveal Elektra lying on the floor. Dibs pushes the others back and examines the inert young woman…

85. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Nansen and Ettore carry Elektra into the lab. Dibs makes the men leave so she can be alone with the young pregnant woman. She tries in vain to resuscitate her…Elektra is dead; Dibs passes the ultrasound over her stomach. She records the death of the foetus. To understand what happened she has to remove the foetus. Her examination reveals it was afflicted with a serious defect …

Dibs places the foetus in a small case.

While Dibs washes Elektra's corpse, Chandra enters and reproaches her for yet another failure. Dibs retorts that it was nothing to do with her. It was the fault of the circumstances, the motor's breakdown…feeling humiliated, she accuses him of being unfair, for abusing his authority over her. He might regret it one day. She knows all about him. Chandra smiles. "And then?...what does that matter?", he says.

86. INT. DAY – LOWER LEVELS AND THE SARCOPHAGUS CHAMBER

Ettore and Nansen place Elektra's body in its sarcophagus: her face has a serene quality in the greenish light. The case is inscribed with her name.

Monte's voiceover: "Unlike the preceding years, we were now traveling at 2G…"

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89. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LOWER LEVELS, SARCOPHAGUS ROOM

Nansen is lying next to Elektra's sarcophagus; he sobs. Tcherny comes in…in his stupor, Nansen breaks down in grief and exhaustion. Tcherny picks him up: "Fuck me, you weigh a tonne". Tcherny can't bear his weight and so he changes technique, holding Nansen up under his arms, dragging him backwards like a dead weight.

90. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LAB

Tcherny puts Nansen down but he clings to him. "Stay, don't leave me", he begs. Tcherny is embarrassed that Dibs is a witness to this scene; he asks her to take care of him. Dibs gives him a shot: "He'll be ok. He needed his little cocktail – he hasn't had one for a few days". "We could also do with a nice little cocktail", replies Tcherny. Dibs produces some pills and hands them over. "I take them everyday myself".

88. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE SHIP

Corridors, common room, sleeping quarters…the crew take a break…Monte's voiceover: "…We now weighed double our natural weight. It's bearable but slows everything down…" From this point on, everything seems to be visibly compressed, as if the space itself of the ship was being crushed. Each movement, each action is weighed down by the change in gravity within the ship…

91. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – GARDEN

Monte sits with Tcherny in the garden, crumbling some cannabis into his metal pipe. He passes Tcherny the pipe as Tcherny starts to sing "There was a boy/ a very strange enchanted boy/ They say he wandered very far, very far/ over land and sea/ a little shy and sad of eye/ but very wise was he/…". 'Nature Boy' by Nat King Cole suddenly fills the garden.

92. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Monte sleeps…

Monte dreams: *The house by the beach, empty, deserted, the breeze blows in from the boundless ocean. On a terrace with a rusty barbeque something takes form, dominating the space…it's a compact, mind-boggling geometrical structure made up of several modules, evoking an intricate and slowly expanding multitude of spheres and rings…this*

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landscape continues to take on new dimensions that are beyond any human representation.

Monte wakes…

93. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CORRIDORS

The empty corridor at night… Monte's voiceover: "By this point, we were all fucked up".

94. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS, CORRIDOR

Monte wanders down the corridor…he stops before Nansen's open door, hovers on the threshold, watching Nansen in the darkness. Unaware of Monte's presence, Nansen makes his bed in the military style, then unmakes it, remakes it, unmakes it, remakes it, unmakes it, and remakes it…

Monte makes his rounds of the sleeping quarters where everything is dark and quiet…he notices that, of the 'old' crew, the lights are on in Tcherny's room but it's empty…

95. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LOWER LEVELS

In the dimly lit lower levels, Monte follows the trail of little blue lights like Ariadne following her thread out of the labyrinth. He skirts around two gigantic reservoirs hooked up to the main engine of the spacecraft.

96. MONTE'S VISION

Monte's mind's eye illustrates the working of the engine as if it was transparent…

In the first reservoir, a dense mass of ferruginous material swirls weightlessly in the bluish waves of a magnetic field…

In the second reservoir, a few tons of anti-iron, also weightless and subject to the same effects of the magnetic field…

A piece of advanced technology combines a very tiny quantity of matter and anti-matter, which unleashes a miniscule gamma ray that possesses colossal energy – which provides for all the needs of the spaceship.

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97. INT. NIGHT – LOWER LEVELS

Monte heads towards the light, where he discovers a bare-chested Tcherny smeared in black scraping a picture of a ship on the walls of the hold. The whole space is covered in his work: drawings, engravings…Tcherny spins around. Monte is struck by the distress in his eyes…they say nothing to each other. Monte takes a seat and watches his comrade-in-misery cover the bowels of the ship with his mysterious messages…Monte's voiceover: "We were approaching the black hole… the crew was infected by a strange attitude of fear and defiance. We lived in a permanent state of uncertainty…" Tcherny interrupts his work and comes to sit next to Monte. The two men are close. Tcherny puts his arm around Monte's neck and after a moment of communion he asks, mostly rhetorically: "Tell me, Monte, do you really trust Chandra?". "Why do you ask?" "I don't know. I think I trust you but, Chandra, I'm not so sure".

98. INT. NIGHT. – GARDEN AND CORRIDOR

Monte crosses the garden and notices footsteps in the substrate. Behind the tallest plants, he discovers a patch of vegetation flattened in the shape of a human body, as if someone has laid down there…

Boyse appears, dirty with soil and leaves, almost naked…she's making some sort of shaman's tool out of plant stalks…

Monte watches Boyse completely absorbed in her work…she acts as if nothing had happened, as if Monte wasn't even there. Monte: "What are you doing here?" "What about you?", replies Boyse. "Me, I'm here to smoke. You, it's not so clear? I don't trust you very much. You're odd". Boyse laughs. Monte: "You have no clue about discipline. You don't know what it means to live with other people, to rely on each other…" Boyse: "I never had some shitty family; never needed that. Suits me just fine". He'll never know what she's thinking and he'll never have a handle on her. She scoffs at him, calls him a happy little fag…Totally unperturbed, Monte is quite happy to cut short the conversation: "Come on, you can't stay in here like that. Time to put you back in your box…". He takes her by the arm and forces her to stand. They find themselves face to face in the confined space…he blows on the hair flopping over her face to remove the fragments of leaves. "Put your clothes on", he says. She gathers them up before he pushes her into the corridor.

He walks behind her down the corridor. She feels his gaze, turns around. She smiles knowingly, aware of her allure.

He comes close enough to touch her; he blocks her way. She is up against the wall. He takes her hand, puts it on his face, as if in a caress, and forces the hand over his face, around his neck, then down the front of his torso. "You see, I feel nothing. My body obeys me", he says. She turns away and runs off.

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99. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The tiny spacecraft seems to be gliding forward in slow motion… In the far off distance, an area of pitch black stands out against the bluish, star-studded backdrop. All around the black hole, rays of light are warped by its gravitational field and forced into a strange orbit.

Monte's voiceover: "…The only things that meant anything to us were the constantly diminishing distance between us and our objective…and the repetition of the tasks inflicted on us…"

101. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - LAB

Mink's lower body is covered by a surgical sheet. She sits on a gynaecological chair, her feet in stirrups. Positioned between her legs, Dibs uses a cannula to inseminate her… she then puts down the speculum, takes off her sterile gloves and sits beside her.

DIBS: Keep your legs up and don't move... Mink, I suspect I'm wasting my time.

Boyse, laid back with her knees bent, watches it all with a look of disgust.

BOYSE (To Dibs): You done? Can I go now?

DIBS: I don't need you anymore. Go back to your room. You have to lie down for a while.

Boyse pulls up her underpants, stands up to get into her fleece tracksuit. She leaves.

DIBS: You help each other out.

Mink remains silent.

DIBS: I'm not a fool. For you, I'll always be the enemy.

102. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — SLEEPING QUARTERS

Alone in her room, Boyse turns away from the camera so as not to be taken by surprise. She takes a homemade instrument and washes out the sperm injected by Dibs. As she's hiding away the material, Mink comes back from the lab. As soon as she walks in, Boyse notices her sombre, stone-faced expression. Boyse goes to comfort her but Mink tells her to piss off.

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Mink lies down on her bed; she scratches on the wall, like a prisoner in her cell. Boyse smiles.

103. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Mink's bed is empty but Boyse is positioned in such a way that the camera cannot see Mink's absence. To outfox the surveillance of the 'older' crew, she acts as if she's talking to Mink.

104. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CONTROL ROOM

Tcherny smiles as he observes the scene we have just witnessed on his control screen. He seems not to have been fooled at all by Boyse's trick.

105. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Dibs comes in and asks Boyse why Mink isn't with her…Boyse says she has no idea, it's not her job to keep her under observation.

106. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

At the same moment, in one of the storerooms, Ettore and Monte are stacking food rations. All of a sudden the lower levels and the corridors are plunged into darkness. Ettore: "Shit, a short circuit…". He's hardly had time to turn on his torch when the light flickers back on intermittently, before re-establishing itself. Tcherny's voice crackles in his earpiece to ask Monte what's going on. Ettore: "Nothing, man. Just some rats having a nibble". Then he turns to Monte "…there really could be rats, right?". Monte: "If it's rats then we're screwed – they'll breed and overrun us within weeks".

108. INTERIOR – ARTIFICIAL DAY – MAINTENANCE ROOM

Mink nicks various components from which she assembles a kind of micro-computer.

109. INSERT – INSIDE THE CENTRAL COMPUTER SYSTEM

Ultra fast operations take place, data opens, codes unspool, overlapping with each other, a virus attacks the life-support systems: the ambient temperature etc.

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107. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Monte and Ettore are back in the control room. The ship has become exceptionally warm. As confirmed by the meters, Tcherny and Monte notice that the temperature continues to rise. The software indicates that something is moving about in the mechanical ducts. Ettore is convinced that it's rats eating the cables. Leonard and Nansen take the piss out of him…Boyse watches Dibs, who informs Chandra of Mink's absence. Dripping with sweat, Boyse smiles…

110. INT. – ARTIFICIAL DAY – AIR DUCT

Mink wriggles forward on her stomach in the tight space of the air duct. She's dying of heat, soaked in sweat, and clutching her improvised hacker's device.

111. INT. – ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS

The crew divides into two groups and, hampered by the gravity that weighs down every movement, they make their way through the ship, which has been transformed into a sauna.

112. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR

With the help of a thermograph, Monte locates a source of the heat moving about in the mechanical ducts. "Ettore's rat is one bloody big rat!" says Monte ironically. A heat profile like that could only be a human…following the digital map on his device, Monte heads in the direction of the freight-lift and the lower levels…Chandra, Leonard and Tcherny follow him.

113. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – AIR DUCT

A bundle of pirated optic fibres plugged into a mini computer…Mink, flat on her stomach, has difficulty breathing. The overheated duct has become a trap…she abandons her computer and starts to crawl about blindly, looking for an escape…

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114. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

The signal indicates this is the spot, just above them. Monte: “It’s a dead end, there’s nowhere for her to go”. Tcherny and Leonard tear down the drop ceiling with difficulty. Leonard grabs Mink’s leg and she screams and crashes down. Monte grabs her around the waist but more gently, more nimbly; Mink escapes his grasp and takes refuge above the freight-lift. She makes several leaps to take herself out of their reach and balances on a beam above the shaft. She ignores their pleas and screams out her hatred for Dibs. In her rage, she suddenly loses her footing…desperately she catches herself on some kind of protrusion on the wall and hangs there above the void below. Monte makes a couple of equally risky jumps in an attempt to rescue her from her treacherous position. He grabs one of her hands but she doesn’t have the strength and Mink lets go…falling and smashing herself into the floor below.

115. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Monte looks down from above to see Mink’s disjointed, lifeless body. Then he sees Boyse enter the scene and kneel beside her, lifting her into her arms and holding her head to her chest with its bloodied pale hair.

116. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Dibs squats beside her and slowly lifts Boyse’s arms from around Mink’s corpse. Monte slides down until he reaches the floor. In retaliation for Mink’s death, Boyse reveals to Dibs that she flushed out the sperm and that she refuses to be a battery hen, that she’ll never do it…trembling and covered in blood, she lets Monte move her aside and then steps back…Monte covers Mink with a plastic sheet to hide her disjointed corpse from the others…”Don’t touch her, I want to see her!” cries Boyse. From the debris that Mink brought down in her fall, Boyse grabs a fragment of sharp metal and rushes at Monte, gouging a deep wound in his forearm…

117. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – AIR DUCT

Below the exposed false ceiling, Leonard makes the repairs to the cables.

118. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Tcherny taps away at his keyboard to re-programme the ship’s ambient temperature. Chandra’s furious with what’s happened and accuses them all of negligence…Tcherny:

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”You’re blind, Captain, or are you just trying to wear us down? Stop treating us like shit! Mink wasn’t cut out for this…at least, she never believed she was”.

119. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - LAB

Dibs is bent over Monte’s gaping arm…(this is Monte’s vision from scene 26).

Boyse, handcuffed to the examination table, struggles in vain to free herself. Her hair blows in the vent’s cool air as the temperature continues to drop. Dibs cleans Monte’s open wound with compresses and antiseptic. Boyse looks at Monte…Monte stares back.

Dibs sprays an anaesthetic, presses together the edges of the wound and grabs the box of surgical staples. Dibs: “I’m warning you, this is going to hurt. Injuries take longer to heal now and the risk of infection is greater”. She staples his wound…Monte notices that Boyse has stopped moving, her body is limp, her eyelids closed, as if she’s been drugged. Dibs: “Don’t worry, I sedated her”. She hands Monte a small dose of brown, spongy matter. “This will relieve the pain”. “What is it? You want to sedate me too?” Dibs smiles at him: “Psylocibe mexicana”. Monte swallows it down and as he leaves the room he calls to Dibs: “Good times, and then the squits…”

121. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Dibs is waiting for Monte. She watches him as he lies down on his bed, under the influence of the powerful hallucinogenic. His eyes are closed.

Hands and lips work to break down Monte’s resistance, intensifying his desire, and irresistibly making him hard…he turns over, abandoning himself up to the arms that caress and the body that offers itself up, that pulls him in…in the low lighting, another face appears, the face of Dibs…it’s too late, he has just enough time to pull out but he can’t hold it back. Monte ejaculates…his sperm forms a little pool on Dibs’ trembling stomach…Monte is undone.

122. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – CORRIDORS

Monte strides down the corridors and around the lower levels in bewilderment…his voiceover addresses Dibs …He rails against her: “You knew how important it was for me, since the very beginning. It was my only protection. You knew that. You cheated me; you drugged me. How dare you?!” Weak from the drugs, he staggers about, losing his footing.

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123. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Dibs is alone with Boyse, who's serene, as if asleep, and strapped to her seat with her legs spread. Dibs prepares and injects the sperm…Monte walks into the lab and catches Dibs inserting a small probe into Boyse to inseminate her… the sight always unsettles him but the way Dibs looks at him this time gives him pause. Dibs: "Done". Monte repeats her, "Done", and walks over to Boyse. She lowers her legs. She's beautiful.

124. EXT. INSIDE AN IMMENSE INTERSTELLAR SPACE

Everything is immense, dark, glowing… at the core of this universe shines a miniscule but intense dot that projects two spurts of light… some way from their source they then flare up and become colossal, symmetrical fiery clouds…

125. INSIDE BOYSE

Swimming against the tide, spermatozoids swish their flagella towards the end of a long dark tunnel where a globe-shaped ovum waits… only one of them penetrates the sphere, discards its flagellum and merges its cells with Boyse's.

127. AT THE CORE OF CLOUDS OF GAS

Something pulsates amid the incandescence of the clouds. An embryo's heart beats. Eyes, eyelids, ears, bones takes shape. The cartilage that will form its limbs is already in place.

126. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LAB

Still feeling the effects, Boyse tries to free herself; she screams at Dibs to be freed. Dibs tells her that from now on she'll be under constant watch to stop her inducing another miscarriage. "You're my last chance and I won't let you fuck everything up. If you try anything at all, I'll terminate you".

100. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – GARDEN

In the feeble light of the strip lighting, Monte is laid out in the middle of the plants, still deeply intoxicated. His pupils are dilated…

We see a gun on a picnic blanket…a lively stream of clear water, watercress growing…Monte, as a child, plays in the water with his dog…suddenly he's snatched up

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brutally…when he's thrown down on the grass he looks up at his father in confusion, who gives him a kick up the bum…later we see Monte's face clouded with injustice and sadness as he sees his dog's corpse gently taken away by the current…

128. INT. DAY — CONTROL ROOM

The crew gathers around images of the awesome sight of a black hole, as captured by their telescope. Chandra asks Monte to zoom in… Chandra gives a speech to the team: he explains the Penrose theory, in which the rotation of a black hole might be harnessed to generate energy. This would require the ability to send material through a zone called the 'ergosphere', which is very close to the black hole. Their capsule will be used as a probe to verify that the behaviour of space-time in the ergosphere is as predicted by the general theory of relativity – the enterprise is of course extremely dangerous but also plausible.

Monte's voiceover explains the first images of this black hole.

129. INSERT, CONTROL ROOM CONTROL PANEL

We see a speeded up simulation of the trajectory of the stars as they perform their ballet around the black hole…

130. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOCKER ROOM

We see the feet of the crew's men and women floating above the floor in light weightlessness…

Everyone puts on boots with magnetic soles to combat the effect. Boyse is several months along and has difficulty bending over with her belly…Dibs attaches the straps for her.

131. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Nansen is practising on a simulator that mimics the same procedures that will be used during the capsule's exploration of the black hole. Under the watch of the older crew (Chandra, Dibs, Monte, Tcherny), Ettore and Leonard also follow Nansen's manoeuvres. Ettore has gone back up, convinced that Tcherny has lobbied for his protégé to be entrusted with the job and questioning Nansen's sang-froid. Boyse has maintained her athletic form and despite the advanced stage of her pregnancy she follows the

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procedures like everyone else. Then something stirs within her, as if something has been released…a wet patch darkens her crotch and spreads out…amniotic fluid streams down her thighs and soaks her outfit…her waters have broken but she's unperturbed, emotionless…

132. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE LAB

A sweaty Boyse walks with difficulty down the corridor, then crouches down as she's overcome with an intense contraction…Dibs catches up with her…Dibs feverishly repeats herself: "Stop it - it's premature! You've done it on purpose. You're ejecting it. Stop pushing!...It's too late". Dibs puts herself between Boyse's legs and calls out for help. She strips Boyse's lower half…can see the baby's head…Boyse pushes, pushes, and finally pushes out the child. Dibs takes the child: it's a girl. Right in the middle of the corridor, she puts the new born on Boyse's chest, with the umbilical cord still attached…Boyse doesn't move…she looks down at this little figure, smeared with blood and stuck to her own body…the little premature girl opens her heavy eye-lids and lets out her first cries…the whole crew gathers around the two women, maintaining a respectful distance. Dibs sobs…Boyse seems lost to the world.

133. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

With an air of detachment, Boyse watches Dibs carefully place the premature child in a transparent incubator in the centre of the room. With the child now protected by the soft, pliable structure of the incubator - and its sensors controlling her vital functions - Dibs put her hand through its side and comforts the child by stroking her with her fingertips.

134. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – THE SLEEPING QUARTERS

Dibs is leaning over the infant, cleaning her with damp cloths; the child lets her do it. Boyse watches Dibs take care of the baby from the edge of her bed. Dibs: "You want to try?" But Boyse doesn't respond.

135. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LOWER LEVELS

Dibs opens a crate and checks its contents. Each scanned code gives a beep and the product's name is displayed on her screen: infant formula, nappies… all boxes packed back on earth.

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136. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT – LAB

The tiny child wriggles about in her incubator and fills the whole screen…through its transparent side we see the face of Monte.

137. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Chandra and Monte are at the controls…They all watch the ship's movement around the awesome black hole in a state of astonishment…an underlying tension can be felt among all those present and the crew stiffens when Chandra, rising to the occasion, improvises a speech: "Our orbit is perfect. Without any danger, we can keep ourselves at a reasonable distance from the hole…our battlefield, our moment of glory, and our redemption." Monte notices that little by little the crew warms to the Captain's unexpected tone… "Each one of us is guilty, guilty of having broken the most hallowed laws. And yet we have been given wings, and a second chance to earn our dignity…we shall not become gods…but we shall once again become men. I know that no words can toughen your hearts and prepare you for what will happen tomorrow. But I say to you: do not let fear creep in, nor worry, nor doubt…because we will succeed." The speech is interrupted by the sound of Tcherny laughing. Chandra flares up: "Do I make you laugh?" Tcherny responds, "Remember just what kind of heroes we actually are. We are the vermin of humanity. What kind of honour do you think we have? Your solemnity is ridiculous".

138. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS THEN EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Boyse, all alone, checks the coast is clear before unlocking the door and slipping into the chamber where all the space suits are kept. She finds a nook where she can wait unseen by the cameras.

139. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – NANSEN'S BUNK

Nansen is in front of his mirror trying to shave, but he has the shakes… Tcherny is next to him, exhorting him. As the moment of truth slowly approaches, Nansen is losing it. Tcherny takes off his T-shirt and offers it to Nansen. The younger man puts it on, like a knight pulling on his chainmail before battle to make him invincible. Tcherny reassures Nansen of his abilities; he builds him up and reminds him he's about to become a hero.

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140. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR TO THE EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Tcherny walks Nansen as far as the doorway. They look at each other, Tcherny kisses Nansen on the lips. The two men say goodbye. Tcherny watches Nansen disappear into the equipment room…

141. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Boyse anxiously watches Nansen take down his equipment and prepare to suit up. Nansen senses a presence behind him. He turns around. Boyse steps up to him. Nansen grabs her by the collar: "what the fuck are you doing in here?" But before he can alert the others, Boyse puts one hand over his mouth and with the other plunges a screwdriver into his heart…Nansen releases his grip, his legs buckle…he watches in stupefaction as his blood pours out…he loses consciousness and falls. Boyse steps over his still-warm body and with zero qualms pries his suit from him, gets into it and then puts on the helmet – which makes her unrecognisable. Boyse-as-Nansen crosses the airlock and accesses the launchpad where the two capsules are docked.

142. EXPLORATORY CAPSULE

Alone at the controls, Boyse assumes command of the procedure... With her voice warped by the communication system, she establishes contact with the mother ship's control room and finishes her check-list. Believing he's addressing Nansen, Chandra gives permission for blast-off.

143. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CAPSULE HOLD

The doors to the exterior open. We see the black of outer space. The capsule slowly detaches from its moorings… and launches itself from the spaceship.

144. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

A small jet engine on its flank fires up. The capsule slows briefly and then uses the spaceship's orbit to break out and plunge toward the black hole.

145. INT. CAPSULE

Through the capsule's porthole, Boyse can see the black hole getting bigger, growing

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enormous… Her irregular trajectory sees her steer close to the horizon of the hole but not breach it. The capsule travels faster and faster, reaching its maximum…

146. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Assuming he's speaking to Nansen, Monte guides the capsule.

147. INT. CAPSULE

Boyse orbits the black hole three times in record speed… then goes back, her speed slows down once more and takes her further from the black hole. Boyse removes her helmet and unravels her red hair…

148. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

The crew realise that it's Boyse who's in the capsule…

149. INT. CAPSULE

Stealing the capsule has been her victory and the defeat of their mission. She, the guinea-pig who was consigned to this incessant voyage, who was exploited and impregnated, she has taken her revenge over the course of events by claiming for herself the most unbelievable of human experiences, and the first of its type for mankind. She is free. Nothing and no one can control her now nor bend her to their will. She switches on manual control, takes her fate in her own hands and flicks a majestic V-sign at the mother ship.

150. EXT. CAPSULE SEEN FROM THE EXTERIOR, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BLACK HOLE

The capsule collides with a miniscule cloud of interstellar dust… The friction caused by the impact with the cloud knocks it slightly from its initial trajectory so that it is directed down into the black hole…

151. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE PREVIOUS EVENT, SEEN FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

They are now all fully aware that Boyse has defied them…"Nansen!" bellows Tcherny,

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who leaves the control room in search of him. Inside the control room they hear nothing more than Boyse's breathless panting distorted by the radio. Monte: "She doesn't know the drills…It's a very difficult orbit to maintain. If she is off by a thousandth of a degree…" Powerless in front of their control screens, the crew gathers around Chandra to watch the rest of the manoeuvre play out.

152. INT. CAPSULE

Boyse complains; she hurts all over. She feels as if her body is being stretched out, distending…she cries out…

153. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE CONTROL ROOM

The radio communication between the capsule and ship is cut and Boyse's scream does not reach them. In 3D on the digital command screens we see the capsule, knocked off its initial trajectory by the interference, its direction modified…the capsule gets smaller and disappears into the Einstein ring…Chandra wants to halt the operation to at least bring back the data collected by the probe. For Monte, there's nothing to be done, it's all too late: "We've lost her".

154. INT. CAPSULE

Everything is accelerating…Boyse is no longer in control of her orbit and she calls out in vain. The capsule descends straight into the black hole…

155. CAPSULE SEEN FROM THE SPACESHIP

As the crew sees it, the effect is the opposite: the capsule slows down…As the capsule approaches the black hole, it becomes distorted. It looks frozen in space, slowly transformed into a kind of long bean that implodes and is smeared around the black hole…the machine merges with the black hole.

156. THE SAME MOMENT, ABOARD THE CAPSULE

Boyse is subjected to the unbearable fluctuations in the black hole's gravitation field. The physical effects are appalling, wave after wave increasing in intensity. Her body is buffeted by the wild variations in the tidal forces. She floats, strung out, with her feet being pulled in one direction into the black hole, and her head and neck stretching the other out to the stars. She grits her teeth but the pain becomes intolerable. Her body

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distends and distorts… She lets out one last shriek, before she loses consciousness and is drawn and quartered alive.

157. THE CAPSULE SEEN FROM OUTSIDE AT THE BLACK HOLE'S HORIZON

Boyse is ripped apart: the cabin is splattered with human pulp, with skin resembling bits of pancake flung against the portholes. Under the same awesome strain, the capsule's structure twists and distorts itself in an anarchic dance until its flanks implode and it too is ripped apart – its entrails mixed up with those of Boyse.

158. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS

Tcherny discovers Nansen's lifeless body in the equipment room. He is consumed with rage…he curses the ship, their fate…Leonard and Ettore join him…they've lost all confidence in Chandra and Monte - who they find duplicitous and haughty…and what the hell is the purpose of this black hole – to just wipe us out, like dogs? Ettore casts about and finds several heavy metal tools…

159. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS, THE LOVE MACHINE

Tcherny, Leonard and Ettore lay waste to the Love Machine with their heavy iron bars…the wreckage releases a dense steam…an alarm goes off throughout the ship.

160. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LOWER LEVELS, CORRIDORS

The alarm rings out, signalling a malfunction. On one of the surveillance cameras can be seen the remains of the Love Machine in a cloud of vapour…

161. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE CONTROL ROOM

Monte calls for the others but the crew isn't responding any more. Hunched over, hanging his head, the captain looks lost. He checks that his gun is within reach.

162. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE CONTROL ROOM

We hear a fracas, hostile shouts…Monte's expression clouds…

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163. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS

With their iron bars, the mutineers make their way through the vessel like a horde of wild barbarians; they smash anything in their way, shouting their hatred for the captain and his screw.

164. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE CONTROL ROOM

Tcherny and Ettore burst into the control room and threaten Chandra and Monte.

Tcherny blames the Captain for the deaths of Nansen and Boyse and for putting the rest of the team in danger. Faced with these accusations, Chandra is completely unperturbed. Cool as you like, he commands Tcherny to prepare the second capsule. He himself will complete the mission conferred on him, whatever it may cost. He must retrieve and decode the immense quantity of data that now lies beyond the black hole's horizon. Chandra reveals that their ship is part of a whole fleet of ships exploring the universe…Tcherny rejects these new lies and turns to Monte: "And what about you, Monte – are you with us?"

Ettore threatens Monte if he moves. Tcherny decrees that the mission is over and that they are returning home to earth, whenever that may be. Monte tries to make them see sense…their fuel supplies won't allow them. And, in any case, there would be no point in going home. Everyone they left behind has been dead for centuries. Does their world even still exist? They have no choice.

While Monte argues his points, Chandra reaches for his hidden weapon, turns it on Tcherny and unloads one shot at point blank range…

Tcherny, stone dead, on the floor…

Ettore raises his iron bar and smacks the captain on the head. Chandra collapses, dropping his gun.

165. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

On a two-way screen, Dibs sees a partially obscured, petrifying scene: Ettore, splattered with blood, whirling a sharp-edged iron club…

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166. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE CONTROL ROOM

Monte dodges Ettore's blows and lunges at his throat…the two men roll on the floor. Monte disarms Ettore, punching him savagely with bare fists until the boy moves no more.

167. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAB

Forewarned by what she saw on her screen, Dibs tries to lock the door to the lab but Leonard catches her for speed, forces the door and, armed with his mace, pushes into the lab (which now resembles more of a nursery)…Leonard orders her to step aside, he's taking the child…Dibs refuses to give her up. Leonard strikes her violently on the chest and sends her sprawling across the floor. He smashes some of the medical equipment and approaches the crying child…

Dibs finds the force to get up…seizing a scalpel, she throws herself at Leonard and slices open his throat…

168. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDOR THEN LAB

In the corridor, all is quiet, save the baby's wails. The door to the lab is wide open…Leonard lies in a sea of blood…Monte discovers the injured Dibs. He wants to give her the help she needs but Dibs points to the child flailing in her incubator: "I'll be ok. Look after the child. I've prepared her clothes, some food…". She indicates a plastic syringe full of liquid: "Careful, she's doesn't have the knack of nursing yet". Stunned, incredulous, Monte looks at the baby: "What do you mean, Dibs?...It's my job to look after her?". Dibs: "She's your daughter. I know you know". Monte changes the baby and proffers the syringe full of milk but the tiny mouth remains firmly shut. Monte strokes her lips to tempt them open and she takes her first drops of milk. Dibs cleans her own wound, saying "Gently does it…gently".

We see the baby's throat swallowing for the first time.

Dibs gives herself a shot of morphine…the daily alarm goes off. Dibs takes over from Monte and says to him "Off you go".

169. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — SPACECRAFT

In the lab, in the corridors… red lights blink all over the spaceship like a call to order.

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170. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT— CONTROL ROOM

Seated by his screen, Monte records his daily report for the central computer…

> MONTE: ID 149 reporting. Everything went well. Given the success of the mission, we have discussed and decided - unanimously - to continue on our course... Over and out.

We see the red signal on his screen stop blinking and go out. The computer confirms: "149: report delivered - clearance granted - validation of life-support systems– end of procedure." All the lights on screen go green.

171. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — LAB

Monte enters the lab. He steps over Leonard's corpse… He leans over Dibs; she is worn out and holding the child in her arms. Monte takes the child, puts her back in the incubator, then sits next to Dibs without saying anything.

172. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — LOWER LEVELS, SARCOPHAGUS ROOM, CORRIDOR

Dibs is with the child, she watches Monte lug the corpses and gather them together. He conceals any signs of wounds and body trauma and makes them look presentable in their uniforms. Monte: "Why did you do this to me?". Dibs: "...I don't know. Maybe I wanted to see a child of yours, a child that takes after you…and love it". Monte: "You're really totally mad…you're out of your mind…". There is something off about Dibs. Monte takes the child and helps her head back up to the lab.

173. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — LAB

The baby is in her incubator. Dibs is recording a message for Monte. If he still questions the paternity he can check it himself against his and the child's DNA. She finishes with a series of instructions about the needs of the child.

174. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT - CONTROL ROOM, CORRIDORS, AIRLOCK TO THE EXTERIOR

Everything is calm. Monte sits across from the command board. He looks worried, exhausted…some distant sounds stir him awake. Monte locates Dibs on one of the screens; she's unlocking the door to the equipment room.

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175. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — CORRIDORS

Monte sprints…

176. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT - EQUIPMENT STORAGE THEN AIRLOCK TO THE EXTERIOR

Dibs takes down her suit and her helmet and then goes into the airlock…

177. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT- EQUIPMENT STORAGE

When he reaches the door to the airlock none of his codes work: the system is blocked… He bangs on the door, shouts, tries to open it.

In despair, he sticks his face against the porthole and calls out to Dibs.

178. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT- AIRLOCK TO THE EXTERIOR

In the airlock, Dibs is not wearing any of her protection; she turns her face to Monte one last time and offers a wave. Then she opens the door to the great black void and throws out her suit and helmet. She instantaneously succumbs to the outside pressure and the vertiginous plunge in temperature…at -270 degrees, it takes just a few seconds for her body to freeze and harden into stone…her body is sucked out backwards…

179. EXT. SPACESHIP – OUTER SPACE

Transformed into an ice statue, Dibs does not disappear into the immense darkness of space but instead becomes trapped in the ship's slipstream and trails behind them.

180. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – SHIP

Monte zooms in on one of the screens…we see Dibs with her arms outstretched, her hair frozen in place…a big lock of which partially covers her face.

181. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CONTROL ROOM

Monte plays the guitar. His voice echoes in the empty room…"It has often been my dream /To live with one / who wasn't there / Like an ocean fish / who swam upstream /

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Through nets, / by hooks, and hungry bears… When the water grew less deep / My fins were aching / from the strain / I'm swimming in my sleep / I know I can't go back again… Got the will to love, / the will to love" etc. These lyrics to "Will to Love" play over a series of images and sounds that appear on the spaceship's screens. In the flux of this earthly imagery from an entirely different space-time, we see: litter on the grate of a sewer… residential streets… an observatory, mountains, canyons devoid of any human presence...a wild salmon leaping against the current…a weeping willow by the water…

182. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CONTROL ROOM

The baby sleeps in a homemade hammock…through the lateral windscreen, Monte sees Dibs' corpse, following their ship like a gull behind a trawler. Monte leans over the baby: "You see Willow, it's too sad to keep Dibs with us. You and me have a life to live…we'll put the pedal down and speed ahead…you ok with that?" Monte assumes the controls, starts the acceleration.

183. EXT. SPACESHIP – OUTER SPACE

From outside, we see the jets change their position and fire up again.

184. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CONTROL ROOM

Monte floats briefly in zero-gravity, playing with the baby in his arms. Then he's brought back down to the floor and moves about normally again as the ship is subjected once more to artificial gravity…

185. EXT. SPACESHIP – OUTER SPACE

Freed from the ship's pull, we see Dibs's silhouette slowly disappear from view before being lost to the bluish black infinity…

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187. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS

On-screen title: 'AND THEN'.

We see the ghostly presence of others, like earlier…these figures then dissolve into nothingness… the corridors are cluttered with various abandoned bits and pieces…

186. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT - SLEEPING QUARTERS

We see a small empty bed, clearly fabricated from several other repurposed objects; then we see Monte's face: bearded, greying hair, a survivor with his child…and then Willow, now aged around 5 or 6, sleeping like a cat on her father's stomach. He puts her in her own bed. "You're getting too heavy – I can't breathe". She murmurs in a half-sleep: "Together forever…". Monte murmurs back: "Yes, together, forever". She continues to sleep happily without him. Monte: "All's well, my dear".

He looks at her. He closes his eyes.

120. *MONTE'S DREAM*

A child once more, Monte is flanked by his faithful dog as they watch the whirlpools in the current. Above him a light breeze rustles the weepy branches of a willow tree brushing against his skin…as the dream evolves, Monte returns to his adult form, new sensations develop, and it's no longer his dog that presses up against him but the warm and silky curves of a female body…this vision has a face, the face of Boyse…

187a. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CORRIDORS, THEN LAB AND CONTROL ROOM

Willow and Monte are racing about on home-made tricycles, constructed from the parts of the old gym bicycles…they speed up as their race nears its end and Monte lets Willow win…she shoots around a corner, out of sight, and then Monte hears an unusual noise…he calls out to her several times but there's no answer…he runs to the next corner and sees her lying on the floor. She's pale, not moving, a little Ophelia. It's not

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obvious what's happened - there's no blood – but she might have hit her head on the corner. As he examines her, he's extremely gentle, trying not to move her head. But she doesn't come to. With this, he panics a bit, performs mouth-to-mouth, pumps her chest.

Monte finds a stretcher in Dibs's lab and returns to Willow. He can't carry her so he drags her delicately on the stretcher back to the lab. He puts her neck in a brace…places her on the examining table…then looks through all Dibs's manuals and checks all the instruments…he talks to her all the time: "Willow, Willow, don't worry my dear, everything's going to be fine, I'm going to look after you…" She remains unconscious all this time. Night descends.

He gives her a scan. Tries to work out if he can give her some kind of injection. He starts to freak out as she just isn't responding. He starts to cry; we can see he's losing hope. Then the red lights begin blinking.

Monte delivers his daily report as usual but with tears in his eyes.

He returns to Willow. Her condition is unchanged. He sits next to her in the blue light, talking all the while, telling her that it's only for her that he's here, that he has no reason to carry on if it wasn't for her. He checks her heart repeatedly, her breathing, her pulse. He drifts into a half-sleep. Then Willow's breathing changes, it suddenly becomes deeper, harder, and she regains consciousness. "Ah, there you are, my dear", says Monte, "you're back again. You didn't want to leave me all alone, huh. I missed those pink little cheeks."

193. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — VEGETABLE PATCH

Willow and Monte are on their knees, transplanting some young salad greens into the substrate. Around them, the vegetation looks higher, denser and more luxuriant than ever. The colours and shapes of several plants have been transformed, with green having morphed into blazing yellows or reds.

194. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT —COMMON ROOM

Monte peels vegetables, while Willow stands upright in the doorway where a rudimentary measuring stick covered in notches and numbers has recorded her various heights. He goes over to Willow and measures her. He carves a notch above her head with a sharp object and notes her height.

MONTE: You're growing up too fast.

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189. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT - COMMON ROOM

A shirtless Monte sleeps under the table…Willow (now 10, although she looks 13) removes a platter from the hot plate and sits down to eat…then she kneels down next to Monte, hugs him: “Come to bed, Dad. What are you doing here?” Monte gestures to his den beneath the table, “I feel comfortable here; this is my little house”.

191. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE — CLOUD OF MAGNETIC WAVES

The spacecraft passes through a random ripple of gravitational waves…

192. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CONTROL ROOM

Willow pays no attention to the flood of images that mean nothing to her. Her fingers write on a touch screen. She draws signs, circles, crosses, squares, curlicues. Monte sits beside her. His white patch of hair has grown wider and he is notably grey at the temples. He tries to copy his daughter's strange script. Willow corrects his mistakes.

WILLOW: You'll learn. It's easy.

Monte has another go…

Suddenly there is interference on the spaceship screens… They all go off at the same time, come back on at the same time, broadcasting images, music or simply screens full of static. The images disappear. All that remains is the music… Through the porthole, Monte and Willow see the cloud tear apart like a strip of gauze.

188. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CONTROL ROOM

Willow types some passwords into a computer, passing through several levels of security and accesses various documents protected by central control: the faces of the crew appear…she pauses at Monte’s file, biographical history, judicial review…In the end, Willow highlights the documents and deletes them…

195. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — SLEEPING QUARTERS

Willow tosses and turns in her bed (which is bigger now) with a stomach ache until she eventually gets up… she’s on the cusp of puberty…suddenly she climbs into Monte's bed and huddles up against him.

MONTE (awkward): What are you doing? Go back to your bed…

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But Willow wraps her silky arm around Monte's neck…

WILLOW: My back hurts, my stomach hurts.

MONTE: It's ok, baby, don't worry. You just have to bear it; we don't have any more painkillers.

198. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – LAUNDRY ROOM

Monte throws some dirty laundry into the cleaning system…Willow enters, carrying some of her own washing. Monte: "Pass that here". As he takes her things from her he notices the brownish stains of dried blood on her panties. She is unfazed.

196. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT —COMMON ROOM

Pre-prepared trays of food are slid into the microwave.

Willow stands up, balances on her hands and feet, and starts doing a series of cartwheels… Her tee-shirt slides down to reveal her chest…

MONTE (To Willow): "Come and eat. It's ready…" (He looks at her) "Put something on. You're not going to stay like that, right?"

When she joins him at the table, Monte says: "I dream about a real barbecue instead of this reheated crap. There's nothing in the world better than a barbecue, Willow! It's the be all and end all…In the summer, that house, it was the house for barbecues. Even if all that belongs to a lost world today…I swear, I still dream about it…" Willow watches her father's mounting enthusiasm…

Monte improvises, imitating the mannerisms and voices of various guests at his imaginary barbecue: neighbours, children, parents, and friends etc. He choreographs and mimes everything. But Willow quickly interrupts him: "Yeah, yeah, I know…with the sausages, and the dog, and the beer…I know, I know…and you get the embers glowing - absolutely essential for a good char, right? - and then you have all the sauces, 'a good time was had by all', then everyone has a choc ice, and then the little boy kills his father…" Monte: "Kills his father? Do you think it's possible?" She looks at him. "Yes, maybe…"

Monte looks at her in astonishment.

She puts her arms around him, just like a woman. He pushes her away. "What would I

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do without you?" she says, "I'd be alone. We have to stay together. It's not a life if there aren't two of us. Don't push me away. I need you".

199. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CONTROL ROOM

On the control board, Monte spots something approaching. He zooms in; the computer recognises the mysterious object: it's another spaceship. Monte tries in vain to establish contact. There's no response.

200. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The unknown vessel approaches the spaceship. It's like a twin to theirs and bears the number 9.

201. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CONTROL ROOM

Monte calls his daughter…

MONTE: Stay with me.

On the control board, he initiates the ship's lateral thrust. He then hands over the controls to Willow. Monte: "Take my spot. I'm going to check it out." Willow: "What do I do if you don't come back?" Monte: "I will." Willow: "Yeah, but what if you don't?" Monte: "Well... you carry on alone."

202. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The lateral jet engine alters the spaceship's course to bring it closer to the unknown twin spaceship.

203. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CONTROL ROOM

Willow takes over the controls. She handles the approach manoeuvre. Through the lateral porthole, we see the spaceship dock with spaceship number 9.

On the control screen, she sees her father in the airlock get into his spacesuit and helmet then give a thumbs up in the direction of the camera before disappearing into the airlock.

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204. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – UNKNOWN SPACESHIP

Once inside the spaceship, Monte proceeds with caution… It looks empty, abandoned. Seats ripped up, a shattered helmet, torn clothes and debris litter the entire place… All his sensors are green: the atmosphere is breathable. He takes off his helmet.

We suddenly hear growls, barks… A pack of feral dogs come into view, circling Monte…

205. ONSCREEN IN THE CONTROL ROOM – THE INTERIOR OF THE UNKNOWN SHIP FILMED BY MONTE

Willow looks in utter fascination at these strange creatures baring their teeth at her father…Willow brushes her fingertips over the screen to touch these 'things' so new and so alive…"Are they real dogs, Dad?" asks Willow through the radio. "You bet they are!" comes the response.

206. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Willow pulls on Boyse's suit (which is almost the right size) and then fixes on her helmet…

207. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – THE UNKNOWN SHIP

While Monte continues to keep the pack at bay, Willow enters the airlock of vessel number 9 in her spacesuit…utterly without fear, she joins her father, approaches the dogs and sticks out a hand to stroke them…but one of the dogs latches on to Monte's calf. Willow grabs a heavy scrap of metal bristling with sharp edges and smacks the dog with all her might until it releases its grip and goes into convulsions in a pool of its own blood. The pack descends on the dead dog and rips it to pieces. Monte and Willow take advantage of their fight to retreat to the airlock. But Monte suddenly realises Willow is holding a puppy. He's horrified and gestures for her to throw it back. Finally, he snatches it from her hands and throws it back into the ship. They squeeze out through the door of the abandoned spaceship. He locks the door shut, finally out of reach of the raging animals.

208. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — IN THE AIRLOCK

Monte takes off his ripped spacesuit…his calf is red where the dog's bite has left an ugly wound. Willow: "Why!? You don't control me. We could have kept that little dog".

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Monte: “Don’t be silly”.

209. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY — CONTROL ROOM.

Willow cleans up Monte’s skin with some antiseptic…she then sticks a syringe into his shoulder and injects a shot of vaccine…Monte: “So, that’s the last one?” Willow: “Yes. Fuck. Fuck. I wanted that dog. I would have loved that little dog. I’ve got nothing. I have nothing to hold or kiss or touch or anything. I’m lonely with you.”

Through the porthole, Monte and Willow watch spaceship 9 drift away from them.

Monte uses the repairs box to patch up the superficial damage to his suit.

She watches him work. Willow: “I love you. You’re so good at everything. I won’t kill you”.

210. INTERSTELLAR SPACE —APPROACHING A GIANT BLACK HOLE

In the distance, a rich mixture of gas and dust shoots out in every direction… The giant quasar’s fireworks are captured by the ship’s cameras…

210a. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Willow: “This one is ideal”. Monte, softly: “Yes”. Willow: “That’s not a strong yes”. Monte doesn’t reply…Willow: “Dad, we have to do it” Monte: “Well, we could avoid this one. Go on. Find a better one.” She sees he’s abandoning hope. Willow: “No, this one. It’s the best. This is ours. I can feel it. Look it’s watching us”.

211. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY–SPACESHIP CORRIDORS

Willow and Monte put on their metallic soles to compensate for the slight effect of weightlessness.

212. EXT. INTERSTELLAR SPACE — THE GIANT BLACK HOLE

The stars have almost completely vanished… A gigantic disk of accumulated matter, warped by the pull of the black hole, forms the surface of this colossal glowing monster.

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At its centre, the eye of the black hole opens its lid to watch the fragile spaceship orbit around it, like a predator before its prey.

213. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY – CONTROL ROOM

Willow is at the front porthole…

Monte comes and sits next to her, surveying the gigantic, sporadic spurts of dust.…

MONTE:… “We'll be destroyed by the firewall before we even make it inside.”

WILLOW:… “No, there is no firewall. This I know.”

214. INT. ARTIFICIAL DAY - CAPSULE HOLD

Willow is in the capsule’s cockpit, which sits on its launch pad. At the observation deck, Monte watches her at work, checking one by one the various flight procedures.

WILLOW: The computer is giving me incorrect data. Something’s not working right. Over.

MONTE: Copy that, Willow. Sorry, I forgot we needed to make the report. We'll deal with that right now. Over.

215. INT. ARTIFICIAL NIGHT — CONTROL ROOM

At his screen, Monte records one last report for the central computer…

MONTE: ID 149, reporting. Objective in sight. Departure on exploratory mission. Request all data concerning crew be immediately erased and destroyed. Scheduled abandonment of spacecraft. Over and out.

Onscreen, the red signal stops blinking and goes off. The computer confirms: “149: report received – request granted – your life-support systems will not be reactivated – end of procedure.” Onscreen, all the indicators turn red.

216. ABOARD THE CAPSULE

Monte and Willow launch themselves from the spaceship. The capsule hurtles toward the black hole. As they move away, they look back at the empty spaceship, perfectly stable in its extremely slow orbit.

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217. IN THE BLACK HOLE

Inside their capsule, Monte and Willow have penetrated the black hole… and yet nothing happens…

They remain silent.

They look back: the view is staggering… Everything closes in around the capsule.

The black disk continues to grow bigger and bigger as it envelops them, leaving only a shining round aperture above… through which they see the entire universe massed together. Their stomachs lurch. They are suffocating in their spacesuits, which have become too tight… Willow rips off her spacesuit. Monte does the same.

A yellow light grows and grows before them…they enter into this yellow zone… the yellow light, growing more and more intense, transforms them, transforms their bodies. Their molecular structure transforms. Their skin irradiates like an armour of pure gold… They lie back, lie back and stretch out like Titans… their faces morph, so does their sex, shape, species, nature… Monte is petrified… Willow accepts each new change in a state of grace…

The capsule and their long-limbed bodies fuse with the light.

The horizon of the black hole and the entire sky become a ring of intense yellow light, almost white.

This is the last thing we see: that immense ring… infinitely luminous… and around it… blackness behind… blackness in front…

And one lone line of blinding light.

It shrinks, it shrinks, it shrinks…

We reach the singularity. The culmination of time and space.

An incandescent white pinpoint that obliterates the retina…

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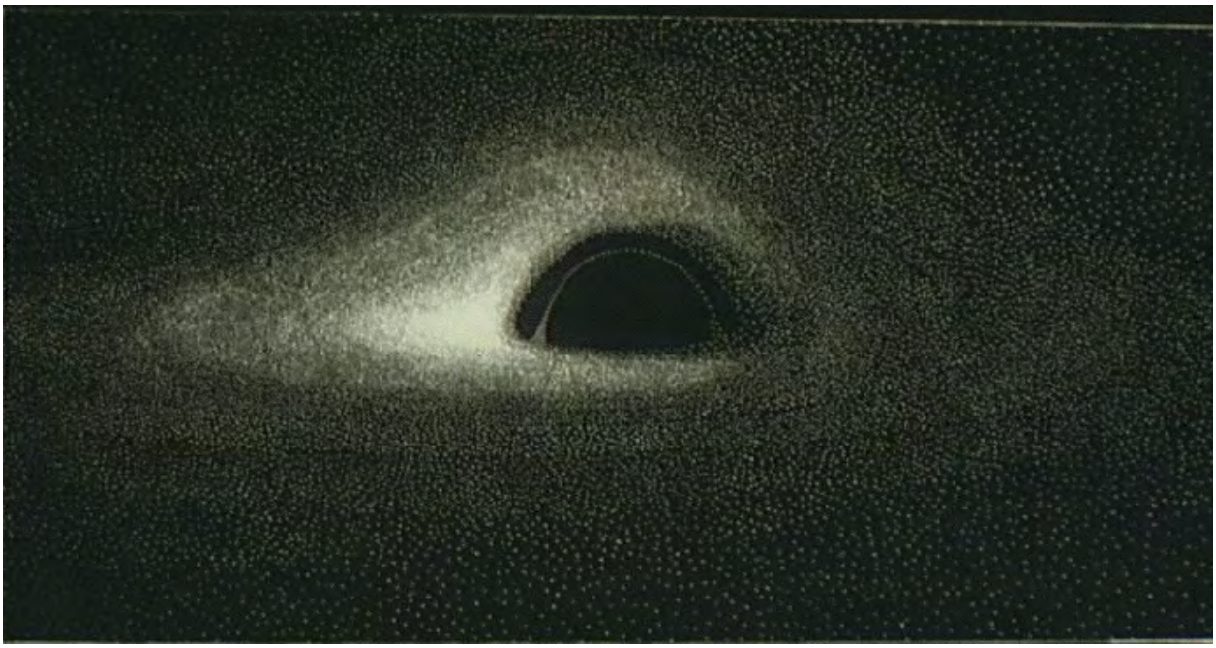

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